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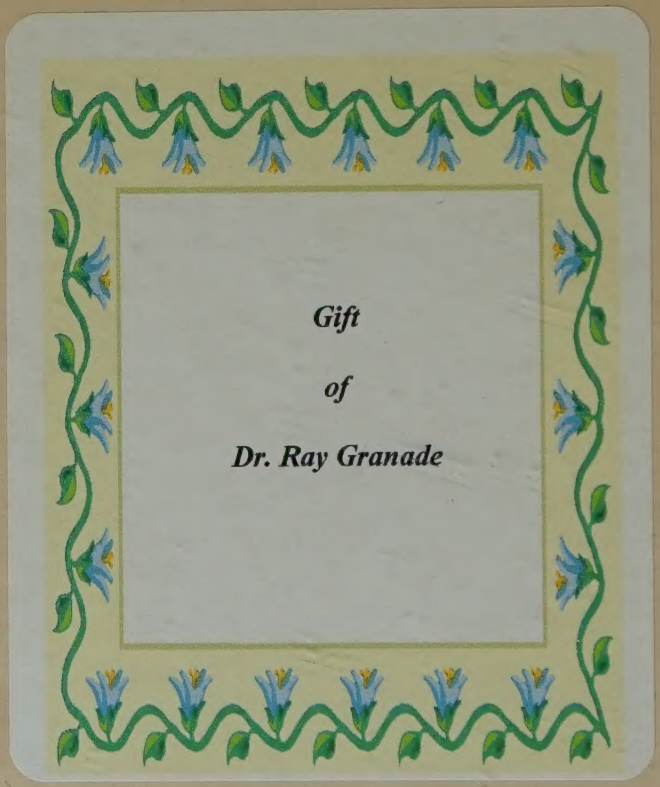

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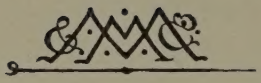

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BY

HENRY MAYERS HYNDMAN

AUTHOR OF "THE RECORD OF AN ADVENTUROUS LIFE"

MACMILLAN AND CO., LIMITED
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1912

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PREFACE

My first volume of Reminiscences was so kindly received, both by my critics and by the public at large, that in the present book I have brought them up to date. I scarcely dare to hope, however, for the like good fortune with regard to these somewhat numerous additional pages. I have been rash enough to speak of recent events and of well-known people still living with as much frankness as I indulged in before, when dealing with more remote matters and persons. I recognise that this has its drawbacks. It is possible, nevertheless, that some readers may not object to seeing the problems of our daily life, and the characters of a few of those who are endeavouring to handle them, sketched from a different standpoint from that which is usually occupied. I have done my best to put what I have to say clearly, and with as little of prejudice as is possible for one who has always tried to be in the thick of the fight.

H. M. HYNDMAN.

9 Queen Anne's Gate,
St. James's Park, London, S.W.,
November 1912.

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CHAPTER I

FROM 1889 ONWARDS

It is, admittedly, a very difficult matter to write satisfactorily the history of a period close to or actually within the writer's own lifetime. Events are not sufficiently distant to adjust themselves in their proper perspective: the relative importance of this or that political or social crisis is very hard to determine; and personal feelings or prejudices are apt to affect the judgment very seriously. This applies even more forcibly, I think, to an attempt by an individual to give any account of his doings within thirty years or so of his setting down the facts of his own record. An old man may look with a certain amount of detachment, or even of assumed indifference, upon the actions or vagaries of his own personality during the earlier years of its existence or even up to middle age. But when he comes to deal with matters that are still live portions of himself, then the autobiographer is not unlikely to figure as an egotist, a character which it is no easy task to relieve from boredom. The egotism may possibly be pardoned: dullness is an unforgivable sin.

When the International Socialist Congress of the divided skirt, if so I may call it, was held in Paris in 1889, and the Boulanger episode was scaring well-fed French Republicans with its evidence

of the antagonism of Parisians and Provincials to their shopkeeper rule, an active rivalry, not to say antagonism, was still going on in Great Britain between the Social-Democratic Federation and the Socialist League similar to that which existed in France between the Marxists and the Possibilists. We all took ourselves very seriously in those days. We were just as confident of success then, when we were still "the feeble band, the few," as we are to-day, when we are the coming party in every civilised country. Sometimes I think we were even more so.

It was the principles that counted, not the numbers who embraced them. And our differences seemed only to make us more fanatical. These disputes will arise at the beginning of every great historic movement, often about apparent trifles. The men and women involved in them are so desperately anxious to push ahead, they attach so much importance to matters which are afterwards seen to be of much smaller significance in relation to the general development than appeared to be the case at the time, that personal antagonisms and animosities are sure to arise. It is impossible not to regret the energy wasted and the enthusiasm frittered away by such bootless internecine strife.

I have just been looking through the back volumes of *Justice*, a journal which, whatever may have been its defects, has the merit of being the one and only organ of the wage-earning proletariat that has ever lasted in this country for more than a quarter of a century. It is quite interesting for those who like to study development or reversion to type, to compare what some of our friends and enemies of yesterday wrote and said then with what they write and say now. Read this, for example :—

> First of all we must enlarge the stock of ideas of the now active members of the Radical Party. The one idea, till

quite recently, of the caucuses throughout the country is the cuckoo-cry of "Home Rule." Go to any local caucus meeting in London and you will find this still the official topic. I say it is a cuckoo-cry because it is used for the most part absolutely without intelligence. . . . At present it seems possible that Home Rule might result in the creation of an Irish agricultural proletariat, wage-slaves like the English country labourer, and having not even the apparent interest in the land that the peasant farmer now has. The substitution of the capitalist farmer for the absentee landlord would scarcely be a permanent gain. . . . Meanwhile the policy of Social-Democrats is clear. It is by keeping our aims distinct, as Socialism, from those of either party that we have made Socialism a force in politics. It is by pursuing the same independent course that we may make clear to all the workers that whoever, be he Liberal or Tory, is content with the capitalist system is repudiated as a reactionary by every voter of the democratic.

Just so. Might not that have been written yesterday? I am writing these lines in July 1912. The above very sound doctrine was, however, propounded in March twenty-three years ago by him who is to-day the Hon. Sir Sidney Olivier, Governor of Jamaica. It takes good stout lungs and an unimpaired physical and mental constitution to last over the very stiff course which Olivier then staked out for himself and other Fabians. Naturally enough, not a few prefer an easier gradient and a milder climate. Life in the West Indies is very jolly for a good liver. So my forbears found it.

The Socialist declares that we have had enough of the one-sided civilisation which makes the struggle to live all that the majority know of life; that in a sane system of society the price paid for living should not swallow up the whole of human existence, leaving nothing when the purchase money is paid. If each did his or her share of work, each paying the cost of his living in service honestly rendered, if the best means of production were used to make for use and not for profit, there would be enough wealth and to spare for all, with short hours of labour. At any rate, it ought

not to be possible, and it will not be possible much longer, for a so-called society to exist in which a man who produces nothing can steal hundreds of thousands a year, and waste in luxury sufficient to keep hundreds of families in comfort. The growing discontent among the workers means a movement which will either change the social order or shatter it, which will either distribute more equally all that makes life worth living or spread desolation on every side. An educated proletariat will not suffer in patience under the shameful exaction for a useless and idle class, as an ignorant proletariat has suffered in the past. . . . The only society that can endure is that in which every honest man shall have due share of work, due share of leisure, due share of comfort, due share of everything which gladdens and beautifies life.

That is of 1889 and is signed "Annie Besant."

There are other passages I could quote from her articles which are even more strongly Socialist both in thought and expression. Her influence at that time was very considerable and her work on the London School Board was altogether admirable. Nobody has ever since fully taken her place. For she brought to the Socialist party all the vigour and knowledge which she had displayed on the Secularist platform and in the Secularist press, softened and expanded by the wider scope offered alike to her intelligence and her sympathies by the positive material creed she had embraced. It is doubtful whether any woman of our time has had the oratorical faculty and power of rousing and dominating an audience to the extent which Annie Besant at her best possessed it. Without perhaps exhibiting actual originality she had the power of concentrating what she had acquired and expounding it with so much force and lucidity that the whole sounded quite fresh, and as her manners were as agreeable and her industry as thorough as her eloquence was impressive, we all of us felt that the movement had rarely obtained a more valuable recruit in any country. In council she was as good

as she was on the platform and in the committee room; while the fact that she had cleared her mind of the theological and conventional prejudices which stunt the intelligence of so many able women seemed to render it improbable that Annie Besant would give up the cause she had so courageously adopted and adhered to. I know I used to smile when those who had known her in earlier days predicted she would wind up in the Catholic Church.

That seemed to me so very improbable after five or six years of devotion to the propagation of a much wider as well as more comprehensible religion. What more could a woman of great ability want in the way of a career under existing conditions than that she should be the leading champion not only in the metropolis but throughout Great Britain, and indeed all over the world, of the physical, intellectual, and moral development of children, by relieving them from the wretched results of competitive profitmongery and anarchical indifference in their own homes through direct social organisation for their benefit; holding as she did at the same time a position in the world of thought and letters, an unchallengeable place in the only growing party of the time? Mrs. Besant had joined us just at the moment when, as years rolled on, she could not have failed to enjoy the full fruition of her plucky efforts; the fact that she was a woman securing to her the certainty of universal recognition and the continuance of usefulness on a high plane which might not fall to the lot of any of the men round her, owing to the personal jealousies aroused and the political arrangements interfered with.

So, I say, I could not believe that Mrs. Besant would find another outlet for her faculties which could by any possibility compensate her for the

loss of her Socialist surroundings. But, to invert the French witticism, "Les mères de famille sont capables de tout." After some six years of valuable service she in some mysterious way heard the "call of the East." I have heard it myself, and I can understand the fascination which the ancient peoples of our own Aryan stock, with their ancient creeds, ancient traditions, ancient arts, philosophies, architecture and industries, who dwell on the plains and highlands of Hindustan may have for those condemned to dwell under apparently much more prosaic conditions of existence in Western Europe. Mrs. Besant not only heard but hearkened and went off in the prime of her life and vigour into the mystic groves of Hindu philosophy and religion. I hope that at least she has found comfort and solace therein to compensate her for much more important duties she gave up nearer home. For my own part I could not help sympathising deeply with one of the best-known Secularists whom I met by accident some little time after Mrs. Besant had gone to India. He greeted me with apparent excitement in his demeanour and with great rapidity of speech.

"Oh, I say, Mr. Hyndman, have you seen Annie has been walking in a religious procession between two white bulls?—two white bulls!" I had not seen, but I confess the idea did strike me as ludicrous, and we both laughed heartily and unrestrainedly at the picture which rose up before our eyes. The thing had so great an effect upon me that I went home, got the Indian papers which gave a report of the ceremonial, and laughed again and again at what, no doubt, was really a very solemn business. But surely for a Secularist and a Socialist it was exquisitely funny. At any rate, I never forgot it. When indeed, years afterwards, I again met Mrs. Besant one evening at a reception of the Fabian

Society, there, in spite of all I could do to clear my vision, those two white bulls, dear things, would persist in poking up their flat, moist noses in front of her, and I had great difficulty in refraining from having yet another good laugh. Annie between two white bulls! I shall see her as priestess of the unknown religion thus fittingly attended to my dying day.

But not long ago I was rejoiced to find that her time had not been wholly wasted out there in Hindustan; though most unfortunately, and to my mind inconceivably, she has opposed the great and growing movement for the complete emancipation of India from our ruinous foreign domination. Not only, however, has Mrs. Besant done some good work in the direction of freeing her own sex and giving them a new outlook upon the future, but I observe that missionaries of the Church Missionary Society, whose expenditure in the East has never been "blessed" with success in proportion to the money fooled away, openly declared that the cost per head of converts to their creed had very materially risen owing to Mrs. Besant's adherence to and service in the more ancient and possibly more intelligible faith. That at any rate is satisfactory. The sheer impudence of these reverend gentlemen and their subsidisers in England who take back from Jerusalem and London a strange Judæo-Anglican hotch-potch to Indian peoples who had debated all the essentials of their teachings thousands of years ago has always appalled me. The conceit of superstition knows no decency and has no historic sense of the grotesque. That Mrs. Besant should have done something to check this foolish and expensive religious imposition on Hindustan is a set-off against the white-bull business.

Of Mrs. Besant's propaganda of theosophy I

do not speak. For those who like theosophy, that, of course, is the sort of thing they would like. It has no attraction for me whatever, and I cannot believe that Mrs. Besant herself, when coolly reviewing her life's work, will consider that her recent excursions into the field of the unknown and the unknowable can be regarded as of any value whatever. I understand, however, that her eloquence remains as intelligible as ever it was, and that her audiences are convinced that a Mahatma has come down from a peak of the Himalayas to raise their minds to the unending contemplation of sempiternal uselessness. May their next incarnation be all that they anticipate!

I have spoken of Mrs. Besant's brilliant and instructive oratory as being on a higher level than that of any woman of her day. That is quite true. And yet we had for a short time the services of another woman who, had she possessed Mrs. Besant's advantages and been able to devote herself to Socialism, would, in the opinion of all who heard her, have produced an extraordinary effect. Mrs. Besant was handsome, highly educated, well dressed, and of agreeable manners. Jessie Craigen was ugly, self-taught, roughly attired, and uncouth in her ways. Yet all this was soon overlooked when once the lady began to speak. I shall never forget what happened at the Foresters' Hall in Wilderness Row, Clerkenwell, on the occasion of Jessie Craigen's first appearance indoors before a London audience. We had sent her over to Ireland to gather information about the real condition of the peasantry, having learnt something of her oratorical powers and capacity for studying the details of a case from her speeches in the open air. She was now to give us the results of her investigations.

The hall was packed to suffocation. There were several good speakers on the platform, and I

happened to be in the chair. After a few speeches I called upon Miss Jessie Craigen. She was seated on the platform, but prior to this had not been noticed. She came forward, dumped down on the table in front of me an umbrella, a neck wrapper, and a shabby old bag. Then she turned round to face the audience. She was greeted with boisterous peals of laughter. No wonder! Such a figure of fun you never saw. It was Mrs. Gamp come again in the flesh—umbrella, corkscrew curls and all. There she stood with a battered bonnet on her straggling grey hair, with a rough shawl pinned over her shoulders, displaying a powerful and strongly marked and somewhat bibulous physiognomy, with a body of portly development and as broad as it was long—it was all I could do myself to keep from joining in the general merriment. She paid no attention whatever to this rude greeting. It did not seem to disconcert her in the least. She began quite slowly in a singularly clear and effective voice.

In two minutes the whole audience was listening intently; within five she had them in fits of laughter, this time not at her but with her. A little later tears were in every eye as she told some terribly touching story of domestic suffering, self-sacrifice, and misery. So it went on. This ungainly person was producing more effect than all the rest of the speakers put together. Argument, pathos, humour, eloquence, satire, wit, illustration, invective—nothing was wanting. I have always deeply regretted no verbatim report was taken of this wonderful speech. There was but one opinion among the practised speakers on the platform as to its remarkable merit. One of the most telling touches in it dealt with her bag and its contents. It was of no great size, but it went down upon the table with a thump when she placed it there in front of me.

"Would you like to see what I have got in that bag?" she asked. The audience declared emphatically it would. "I have got in that bag," Miss Craigen went on, "a fine specimen of the soil of the district and the entire furniture of two cottages." She opened the bag and produced a huge stone, a handful of dry mud, with a broken three-legged stool, and an earthenware pot. The use she made of these articles was a lesson by itself in oratorical effect.

Unluckily the S.D.F. could not itself afford to retain Miss Craigen's services permanently, and I am afraid with Mrs. Gamp's appearance she contracted another of that worthy lady's peculiarities. So, to my infinite regret, she went off to speak as a paid lecturer for the temperance fanatics and the contagious diseases people. The well-known story of Abraham Lincoln and General Grant applies so admirably in her case that I dig up the chestnut to plant it afresh here in these pages. Grant, after a long period of reverses to the Federal arms, had succeeded in taking Vicksburg. The victory breathed a new spirit into the despondent ranks of the fighters for the North. At that time the great army of the Potomac was in rather a bad way; it had scarcely recovered from the depression caused by the rout of Bull Run and M'Clellan's scientific strategy. Lincoln spoke of appointing the new Ulysses of the West to that all-important command. Remonstrances poured in upon him hot and strong. Lincoln asked what was the matter with the man of his choice. "President," he was told, "Grant drinks like a fish. He is always drinking." —"Always drinking, eh? Drinks like a fish, does he? What does he drink?"—"He drinks whisky, President, and a lot of it."—"Now, just you go and find out for me where he gets his whisky from. I'll send a cask of it to all my other generals." If

it could have been established beyond a peradventure what was the special tap of strong waters which found favour with Jessie Craigen, it would have paid us well as propagandists to send a keg or so periodically to all our Socialist speakers. I have not seen her or heard of her for many years, but I shall always declare that the finest woman orator—I do not know that I need make any limitation of sex either—whom I ever heard was a none too sober mill-hand from Batley in Yorkshire, whose personal appearance was so grotesque that no audience could help laughing when she got up to speak.

As I look back over those long years of constant, indefatigable propaganda, I wonder not that we have made so much way—though the whole tone of the discussion on social questions has completely changed, in large part owing to our work—but that we have made so little. True, thirty years are nothing in the life of a nation, and a full generation counts for but a short space of time in such a campaign as we have gone out upon. Nevertheless when everything is taken into consideration it is perhaps surprising that we have not got farther.

The principles taught remain exactly the same. The methods have varied according to circumstances. The old devil-take-the-hindmost theories in economics and politics have been largely undermined. There has never at any period been opposition to encounter which could be regarded as at all formidable. But our people are very difficult to deal with. They have neither the dash and go, neither the spirit of revolt nor the fighting idealism of the French; they are destitute of the education, of the basic principles, of the stern patience and voluntary discipline of the Germans; and after five or six generations of capitalism they are so infected with bourgeois conceptions and

profitmongering aspirations that they regard revolution as madness and compromise as the noblest working-class weapon. It is much more difficult to make a permanent impression on a feather bed than on an oak door. If you knock it in at one point it juts out at another.

I remember on one occasion my wife, who is a countrywoman by birth, trying her propagandist powers, which are really very good, upon an agricultural labourer. She held forth to him upon his miserable wages, his tumbledown and cramped cottage, his lack of opportunities of enjoyment, the manner in which the common land hard by had been filched from him, the shameful fact that he could not get a nice bit of garden ground at anything at all within hail of the yearly rent paid by the farmers for their acres, the way in which all the old perquisites and easements had been taken away, the long winter in which, now that thrashing was performed by machinery and there was little arable land around, there was little to do and therefore little to get. The man listened attentively and seemed to agree with her, so my wife felt encouraged.

She went on to point out that all this trouble arose from the fact that he had no property; that he owned nothing, not even the cottage he lived in or the agricultural implements he used; that he was bound to take low wages, because if he did not there was no other way by which he could live himself or get food for his wife and children; that there was no union between him and the other men so that they could make common cause against the farmer and the landlord; that the reason why he had to pay so much rent for his cottage was that cottages in the neighbourhood had been pulled down by the landowners in order to reduce rates on their estates years ago; that owing to cheap food and cheap hay and cheap fruit coming in from

abroad by low rates of railway freight, things were getting worse, and were likely to be worse still. The countryman listened on, told how he remembered when he could do better than he could to-day, and grumbled bitterly at his lot. He had a wife and children—what would become of them? he was asked. The "House" was not a comfortable habitation either for the young or for the old. The good man agreed. He even averred it was a great shame honest folk should be so put upon—that it was.

My wife thought she had got a convert. So she told him what a good garden at a light rent, co-operation in sending his produce to market, joint ownership of the land by himself and his kinsfolk in the towns, would do for him; how he could help them and they him to have all that was needed, with no anxiety at all about the future; how his children would be much better off still when this great change had been brought about. There he sat listening stolidly, with the land about him, which I myself remembered as well-tilled and prosperous, going steadily out of cultivation, and the active village of the last century becoming a deserted Sleepy Hollow of to-day. When my wife had quite finished—and it took a long time to put all this after a fashion to be understanded of the Sussex mind—he took his clay pipe slowly out of his mouth, and spat and spoke. "Thank you, marm. You thinks so! I thinks otherwise." Yet he was neither cynic nor philosopher. No easy matter to rouse that sort of human. Joseph Arch's Union of Agricultural Labourers did not last long. And the English townsman is in the great majority of cases only the ignorant countryman veneered. Emigration can do much to deprive a nation of its most vigorous stock: bad food, bad housing, ignorance, and absence of physical training can do more.

It is very exasperating to note the fitful and off-hand manner in which the governing classes endeavour to remedy the evils arising out of system. The Royal Commission on the Housing of the Poor was held in 1880, the chairman being Sir Charles Dilke, and the late King a member. It was a most elaborate farce conducted in the most solemn manner. The sympathy for the unfortunate people who were pigged together in the frightful way described by witness after witness was intense. It was universally agreed in the Commission and outside that this frightful state of things, so ruinous alike to the physical well-being, intellectual development, and moral character of millions of our nation, must not be allowed to continue. It was decided with equal unanimity that something must be done immediately. Monarch and subjects held absolutely identical views on this serious subject, and the whole press from Dan even unto Beersheba, from the *Times* to the *Star*, and from the *Quarterly Review* to the *Sporting Times*, were in one continuous flow of sympathetic articles to the same effect. Both Houses of Parliament brought up the rear in this national procession of dust and ashes to adjure the powers of—but what is the use of writing on? Huge Blue Books were printed, a tremendous Report was compiled, and—as was intended from the first—nothing whatever was done.

Not a man sat on that Commission but was well aware that any really vigorous attempt to give the poor of our people decent homes to live in would bring the whole fabric of our competitive civilisation crashing to the ground. As it was in 1880, so it is now, and so it ever shall be until the entire social system undergoes its long-deferred but inevitable transformation from competition to co-operation, from capitalism to Socialism. Yet

when we Social-Democrats pointed this out quite plainly a generation ago, and predicted clearly what must inevitably occur, Royal Commission or no Royal Commission, we were denounced as irreconcilable subversionists and dour self-advertisers of the disloyal, envious, and baser sort. Royal Commissions are, of course, an organised fraud. Their special object is to push off any immediate decision and to gain time—to follow, in fact, that policy of calculating procrastination so charmingly set forth by Lady Dorothy Nevill, as noted in my previous volume. The Prince of Wales has become King Edward VII. and is dead since then; Sir Charles Dilke is dead; nearly all the other Commissioners are dead or in their dotage. Nothing accomplished, nothing done, they've earned a long repose!

And yet in spite of my accurate knowledge of the real meaning of these futile and wearisome investigations, I was foolish enough to offer myself as a witness before the Royal Commission on Labour in 1892, of which the Duke of Devonshire was the Chairman and Mr. Geoffrey Drage the Secretary. What is more, I took a great deal of trouble to get up my evidence, or rather, I ought perhaps to say others, especially in the matter of railway freights, took a great deal of trouble to get it up gratuitously for me. I believe I was the last witness examined.

The late Sir Robert Giffen's reputation for sagacity and dexterous figure-handling was then at its height among the employing and administrating class. Giffen had always placed his great industry and not inferior pliability entirely at their disposal, and he was enjoying his rewards. Needless to say, he being a Scotchman, that these took the shape of a very considerable income paid quarterly, with a knighthood thrown in just to

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register the completion of the contract. I knew Giffen well. He immediately preceded me in giving evidence, and long overpassed the time at which I was supposed to have been called. I told him afterwards I believed he did this on purpose, in order to prevent me from knocking a hole in the bottom of his pro-capitalist calculations. He laughed, and so did I. Of course, being really a very clever fellow, he knew as well as I did that the whole thing was humbug from end to end, and that we Socialists were as sound in our economics and statistics as we were in our criticisms of the general social effects of the profitmongering system of production. But it did not suit him to say so, and he played the game well on the side he had chosen. At last he finished, and I recommend any one who wants to understand how to make the superficial pass muster as the profound to glance through Giffen's evidence that day.

It was a blazing hot day in August, I remember, when my turn came, and I went forward to give my views. The Duke seemed bored to death, and I did not wonder at it. Of course he always was bored to death in politics, and in most other things too. Boredom was born with him, and was part of his being. The only time I ever saw him quite half-awake to the actualities of life was one day when my wife and myself were out on a picnic on the Thames with some well-known society people, men and women who had discarded pomp and circumstance for the nonce, and were rowing their own boat and making ready to prepare their own provender; a very jolly party indeed. As we went joyously along, we came upon a man and a woman in a boat as broad as it was long, the man rowing, the woman steering. The man was the Duke of Devonshire, then Lord Hartington; the woman was the Duchess of Manchester. He was taking

his passenger up-stream right vigorously. The beauty of it was that more than one or two in our craft knew both parties to this *tête-à-tête* well. But we passed solemnly and sedately by in silence, until, having got some distance away, a few smiled rather loudly at the meeting, and the less prudent expressed surprise that a man of the Duke's position and knowledge of the world could not discover a more attractive person of the other sex with whom to exercise his rowing muscles on such a delightful day. Still greater surprise found utterance later when the lady of the stern on that occasion became mistress of Devonshire House, Chatsworth, etc. However, there was no rowing of a lady to be done at a Royal Commission sitting, and the Duke, as I say, looked as if he wished the whole thing at the devil, as I have not the slightest doubt he did.

I sat down, and the first important incident was that the Chairman could not find his spectacles. He had doubtless been dozing. He groped for them among his papers, lifted up his desk, felt in his pockets, and went through all the fussy movements natural to any one who had mislaid his artificial eyes and chanced to want them in a hurry. I saw all the time where they were well enough, seated as I was directly opposite to him. He had pushed them up from his nose right into his hair, and there they stuck, glaring at me from that bad eminence. At last one of his fellow Royal Commissioners espied them too, called the Duke's attention to their situation, and my examination began.

Only two points do I consider it worth my while to recall here. First, I proved by figures that it was quite impossible for a man, his wife, and two children to live, healthily and reasonably, in London upon a wage of thirty shillings a week,

rents being what they were, and that the great majority of London workers received considerably less than this, and would continue to do so as long as competition for mere subsistence ruled in the labour market. Under these circumstances physical degeneration was inevitable. I then suggested some of the well-known Social-Democratic palliatives, formulated as stepping-stones to a more hopeful period ten years before, as not unworthy of the attention of the Commission. Of course the Commissioners smiled supercilious smiles, and some of them asked supercilious questions. They had come there not to recommend measures to ameliorate the conditions of the working people who kept them in luxury, but in order to discover super-excellent and scientific reasons for leaving things as they were. The dominant classes are no fools. They know perfectly well that if sweating were abolished and unemployment ceased to be, the whole capitalist system would be doomed. They do not want to remedy, but they greatly sympathise. They are eager to help the workers in their poverty but not out of it. I never had all this borne in upon me so forcibly as when I sat there listening to those foolish questions on that broiling summer day. They were wise questions for the maintenance of the men in possession. What did the rottenness of the nation's manhood, womanhood, and childhood matter so long as Cavendishes and Chamberlains, Cecils and Balfours, ruled the roost? It was all so obvious.

The only other point worth noting related to our railway system. I dealt with this because it was and is the fashion to declare that all Socialists who are not envious madmen are mere doctrinaire theorists. It was no affair of mine to tell the assembled Commissioners that I really did know as much, to say the least of it, as any of them

did about railway finance, though I take it I could not by any possibility have acted frequently for the late Austin Corbin on this side of the Atlantic if I had not.

What I was concerned to establish was that our terribly heavy English freight charges and the habit of British railways of giving specially favourable rates to goods from outside this island acted as the most onerous form of protection in favour of the foreigner. These drawbacks to our whole railway communications as a national agency for transport, in so far as concerned freight, led me to look closely into the causes of such a preposterous state of things. Reckoned by freight, or the cost of transport per ton of goods conveyed, Argentina, India, Australia, America, Canada are within the thirty-mile radius of London. The actual cost of conveying a ton of goods on a well-managed American railway east of Pittsburg one mile and with equal break of bulk—a matter which is often put up against railway reformers by reactionary English railway engineers—is from one-fourth to as low as one-sixth of the charge in Great Britain. This is chiefly, if not almost entirely, due to the greater lightness of the wagons or cars used for freight haulage. American railway managers keep their eyes steadily fixed upon the tare or non-paying freight they have to haul and the proportion it bears to the paying freight. A reduction of even 10 per cent in tare with equal durability will cause an American railway to "scrap" hundreds and even thousands of cars of an older pattern, which themselves were more modern in type than any we have on this side of the Atlantic.

Although my facts and figures on this most important subject had been specially compiled for me by the ablest railway statist on either side of the Atlantic, and their bearing upon the labour

question was quite obvious, seeing that the American companies pay fully twice the rates of wages to their employees English companies do, and that the improvement in agriculture and manufacture, other things remaining the same, would be not only enormous but very rapid, when once this heavy incubus of excessive charge for transport was removed—in spite of all this the matter did not interest the Commission. It was too practical for them.

Nevertheless the Duke of Devonshire himself, not as Chairman of the Royal Commission, but as the excellent man of business which as a Cavendish he undoubtedly was, had in use, at that very moment, on his own private railway, light American cars in place of the heavy trucks which English managers persist in hauling to the detriment of the entire industry of the country. Some changes for the better have been made since 1892 in this direction, but in the main reaction still dominates. Passenger carriages are improved each year. Yet if a whole train-load of travellers were uncomfortable, or even were smashed up, the country at large would suffer comparatively trifling loss. Whereas the constant imposition of unnecessarily heavy rates upon every ton of agricultural produce, raw material, ores, or manufactured goods transported, is a permanent and sometimes a prohibitive tax on the nation. Our British railways are a curse to the country: a flagitious monopoly as utterly regardless of the well-being of the community as they are of the lives and the limbs of their workers. I was once in favour of their nationalisation and socialisation with compensation. I am of opinion now that confiscation is the only remedy; though it should, of course, be carried out as part of a great scheme of reorganisation.

A little more attention was given to the ques-

tion of differential rates in favour of foreign imports because it was the question of the moment. It did seem preposterous even to Royal Commissioners that home meat from Cheshire should cost twice as much to send to Sheffield as foreign meat from Birkenhead in the same county; that it should cost just one-third the freight to ship ores and manufactured iron between Essen and port as it did between Sheffield, the English Essen, and port; that fruit and other agricultural produce should lie rotting in English orchards and fields because the freight to London was prohibitive, while inferior foreign eatables of the same description were passing up every night and every day to Covent Garden at a fraction of the rates charged to our own countrymen. This seemed preposterous, I say, but nothing was done then, and nothing is being done now, to remedy such acknowledged and ruinous injustice and folly.

After the decay of the Roman roads in Great Britain and the destruction of the monasteries, which performed the function of road-building and maintenance in this island during the Middle Ages, transport by land in our country became so costly and so insecure that traders and merchants were driven to water-carriage and seaborne commerce. This indeed was one of the great causes of the relatively vast expansion of English foreign trade and external brigandage that was the glory of the reign of Elizabeth and her immediate successors. Undoubtedly, the English railways of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries have contributed largely to that destruction of agriculture and hampering of inland manufacture which is not infrequently attributed to the malefic influence of one-sided free trade. But it is hopeless to expect that any serious improvement will be made, as I pointed out at the date of this

Labour Commission, so long as there are some hundred and thirty railway directors in the House of Commons who sit there in order privately and dexterously to subserve the supposed interests of the monopolist companies. They deliberately uphold the right of their companies to maim and murder their employees, because this is cheaper than to supply automatic couplings to the cars and trucks they use, and they befool the whole of the business world of Great Britain by pointing to the moderate rates of interest paid on their debentures and stocks.

I got just a little fun out of this dull and useless and costly Royal Labour Commission in a few of the definitions of words and phrases and statements in my evidence which I supplied at the Secretary's request. But the proceedings as a whole were as contemptible as the result of it all was valueless to the community. Of course, no practical measures whatever were or have been adopted to improve the position of the labourers or to develop internal trade. But there are the Blue-books, which some day, perhaps, will have a dry-as-dust antiquarian interest for the investigators of the fossil remains of our buy-cheap-and-sell-dear system.

I have given perhaps a little too much attention to this matter of the Labour Commission; but I felt then, and I feel now, that while the upper classes of this country jeer at Socialism and decry those who propagate its teachings, they are themselves quite unable or unwilling to rectify the obvious shortcomings, from the point of view even of practical business, of the anarchical competitive capitalism, which is in full swing all round them.

But in this same year I was given the opportunity of spreading our theories in a manner which

has given me the greatest satisfaction ever since. Though I had been hard at work as a Socialist writer and agitator for more than ten years, and was already well known throughout the British Empire and on the Continent of Europe as a thorough-going propagandist of revolutionary Socialism, I had not had, with one exception, a fair chance of making my views on the Marxist theories known to the educated class in the United States. It was therefore with great gratification I received a letter from Professor Hadley—then Professor of Political Economy at the University of Yale and now President of that great institution—as editor of the Economic Section, inviting me to write the article on "Socialism" in Johnson's *Universal Cyclopædia*, the cheapest and most widely circulated of the literary short-cuts to cosmic information published in the United States. What pleased me even more than the invitation itself was the statement Professor Hadley kindly made in his letter to the effect that the invitation that I should write this important article was unanimously approved by the whole of the thirty-five editors who were at the head of the different departments of the *Cyclopædia*, as well as by the editor-in-chief, Professor Adams. This possibly may not seem anything remarkable to-day; but at that time, when we were all engaged in a desperate uphill struggle here at home, and when the general view about myself was that I was simply throwing away my chances of being useful and wasting my energies in ploughing the sands, or even in turning up miasma-bearing soils to the general detriment, this proposal so made was most encouraging. I need scarcely say that I did my best to send to the *Cyclopædia* a conspectus of Socialism as an economic, historic, and scientific view of modern sociology which should serve the students of the United

States as a brief summary of the opinions held by the only growing party of international politico-religionists in the world. The opening passage of my long article was as follows :—

Socialism is a conscious endeavour to substitute organised co-operation for existence in place of the present anarchical competition for existence; or the system of social organisation calculated to bring this about. This definition, though it gives, perhaps, adequate expression to the active and practical side of Socialism, leaves out of account altogether its theoretical basis. From this point of view Socialism is an attempt to lay the foundation of a real science of sociology which shall enable mankind, by thoroughly understanding their past and present, to comprehend, and thus, within limits, to control the movement and development of their own society in the near future. Consequently Socialism, in its wide sense, is not, as is still commonly thought, merely an aspiration for a better state of society, still less only a series of proposals to mitigate the evils arising from the present social arrangements. Modern scientific Socialism essays to give an intelligible explanation of the growth of human to Society, and to show that as each step in the long course of development from the institution of private property, through chattel slavery, serfdom, and wagedom, was inevitable, so the next step from capitalism to Socialism is also inevitable. The object which Socialists have in view in their propaganda is that this the final transformation should be made consciously by an organised, educated, and intelligent people, instead of unconsciously and therefore tempestuously by groups of discontented, embittered, and ignorant workers. Agitation against the injustice of the present system of production, therefore, is only valuable in so far as it educates men and women to appreciate the tendency of the time, and in this way leads them to organise for the attainment of the definite end which the evolution of economic forms has made ready. Whether the great change will be brought about peacefully or forcibly has no bearing upon Socialism in itself, but depends upon the stage of development which has been reached in each civilised country and the attitude which the dominant class may adopt in relation to the demands that the economic situation impels the producing class to make.

That, of course, is a purely abstract statement upon which I proceeded to marshal the historic and economic facts that have led up to our existing anarchical order. But when I found many years later that this very article had become a sort of little textbook in America for Socialist lecturers to develop their own teachings upon; when I learnt also that the Fabian Society (!) of California had completely thrown over Jevons with his "Final Futility" and had distributed the passage quoted above as a very well printed leaflet all over the Pacific Slope, I rejoiced to know that I had not laboured in vain. Still more pleased was I when, only a few months ago, the able and well-known American author and publicist, Allan L. Benson, who has done so very much to spread the knowledge of scientific as opposed to hand-to-mouth Socialism throughout the great Republic, was kind enough to write and tell me that an accidental perusal of the whole of this article of mine had, with the study that followed thereupon, converted him completely to Socialism. These are the pleasing episodes in the life of a steady and an uncompromising propagandist, and, in company with very many disappointments, I have had my full share of these much more agreeable incidents. What is, however, exceedingly strange to me is the fact that with Socialism thus making way all over the world, and capturing not only the workers but men and women of the highest education and culture, the dominant class here as a whole should still be so deplorably ignorant, and that both factions should still persist in sticking to the old ways, encumbered as they are with the mud of at least five generations.

When Home Rule broke up the Liberal Party in 1886, and the Conservatives with the Unionists entered upon virtually twenty years of government

—for the slight break occasioned by Lord Rosebery's transitory Ministry was of no importance from any point of view—they had the greatest opportunity for peacefully reorganising the affairs of Great Britain and the Empire generally that has ever occurred in our history. I have always been of opinion that in this country an ordered and generally accepted transformation, political and social, can only come from the Conservative side. But it is mere optimism to hope that it will ever so come. Reaction and privilege have too many charms for the dominant class to permit it. At the critical period they not only refuse to make the necessary sacrifices, but hunt around for some specious means of postponing the conflict which they know is sooner or later inevitable. And they have, of course, never failed to find men to play the game of procrastination to the full extent of what is possible.

Mr. Arthur Balfour from his very beginnings as Premier I regarded as the Calonne of the English Revolution, and, different as are the circumstances, the similarity of mind and conduct to the career of the brilliant French indifferentist statesman is surely very marked. Clever, cynical, courteous, agreeable, well-read, and cultivated, looking upon human affairs as merely an amusing episode in a well-nurtured existence, and regarding political business as of no more importance than an interesting game of golf, or a well-performed symphony, Mr. Balfour, like Calonne, is a born procrastinator. His duty, as he saw it, was not to lead but to give the impression of leading, not to originate or reform but to make it clear that he saw the futility of everything that could be proposed before any policy was formulated. In this he succeeded admirably. His intelligence was so far ahead of that of the majority of his party that he could

treat them all with contempt without their knowing it, and his mere debating speeches had so much literary charm that men forgot there was nothing whatever in them. Without, probably, any deliberate intention of deferring the consideration of all important questions until he himself was beyond the reach of any question at all, he, nevertheless, again like his French prototype, was so pleasant to everybody, and so obviously satisfied with things as they were, that marking time became quite an interesting manœuvre, and elegant phrase-making was taken as high statesmanship. So, education utterly neglected, social business left to drift, political obstructions carefully maintained, class antagonisms disregarded—such was Mr. Balfour's idea of dexterous management. Sufficient for the morrow the evil thereof. And all the comfortable Tories said, "Amen."

But by his side was a man of very different kidney. I have only met Mr. Joseph Chamberlain three times in my life; but, leaving aside personal impressions, I have never been able to understand how the champion of ransom and thorough-going social reform and popular education one year was transformed into the equally thorough-going reactionist the next; still less how he was able to carry with him not only his own immediate following and his personal friends, but practically the whole city of Birmingham. It is no doubt very important, and the almost certain road to success, that a politician should believe intensely in himself, and that quality Mr. Joseph Chamberlain possessed and cultivated to its highest development. I should have thought, however, that he had some of that indescribable personal magnetism which is able to attach people to an individual even when they consider the course he is pursuing to be mistaken or wrong. My judgment was unsound

in his case at any rate. There is no personal magnetism about Mr. Joseph Chamberlain. Having, however, given up any attempt to better the lot of his countrymen either by holding the landlords to ransom in the country, or by constructive measures in the towns, he went off into the wilderness of belated Toryism, and took up with Protection under the name of Tariff Reform, with which he coupled a so-called Imperialism of the Colonies that led him farther to fare worse.

The propaganda of Tariff Reform, as Mr. Chamberlain advocated it, was interesting to me, because I followed him on his tour throughout the country and had very nearly if not quite as good meetings as he had in opposition to his views. I thought at the time his agitation would have proved more successful than it has up to the present moment. I expressed this opinion strongly in Paris when I lectured to the students, with Jaurès in the chair. But Mr. Chamberlain did not make the best of his case. Not only did he altogether omit to take account of the heavy taxation levied by the railways, practically in favour of the foreigner; to suggest any means whereby all the advantages supposed to be reaped from Protection could be prevented from going to the landlord and capitalist under the wages system which rules supreme; to point out wherein the competition of Canada or Australia would be less harassing to the English farmer than that of the United States or Argentina; or to explain in any way how India was to come in to his great Imperial scheme; but he also failed to set forth any consecutive policy of Tariff Reform for these islands themselves. The whole thing was nebulous, incoherent, and chaotic. That in fact has been the difficulty with the entire agitation. The most prominent advocates of Protection have never seriously faced the problems they have to deal with.

I went to hear one of Mr. Chamberlain's orations myself, and I was struck with that fact. Lack of grasp is sometimes more clearly exhibited in the hearing than in the reading of a speech. Obviously Protection cannot be the curse which Free Traders represent it to be, or Germany, France, and the United States, as well as Canada and our other Colonies, could not flourish as they do under it. Quite as obviously a country which deliberately permits its agriculture to be ruined in the interest not of the workers but of the manufacturers is cutting at the roots of national well-being. Moreover, the contention of a great thinker of the seventeenth century, that "our Colonies being ours should be us," applies still more forcibly to-day than it did in that comparatively early period of development. But Mr. Chamberlain left such wide gaps in his reasoning, and so completely failed to weld his contentions into a sound and harmonious policy that I was not at all surprised that he was less successful than I myself, who was opposing him as vigorously as I possibly could, imagined he would be. He could not carry his own party with him, nor could he induce the workers to throw aside the sophisms of Bright and Fox and Cobden, or to forget the big-loaf fallacy during the whole course of his agitation. The truth is that Mr. Chamberlain, like other capitalist advocates of Protection, fought with one arm in a sling and one lobe of the brain paralysed. Neither he nor any other Free Trade orator dare handle the social question from the anti-capitalist side. For him there is no fundamental class antagonism, and history was never his strong point. Clear, sharp, incisive in attack, he floundered hopelessly in exposition, and the lessons of two generations of Free Trade and Capitalist industrialism remained untaught, because he and his followers were and are

afraid to follow out their own teachings to their logical conclusion.

Social-Democrats did their best to make use of Mr. Chamberlain's work to push to the front their own theories. I went so far as to sketch out an alternative policy which I claimed would greatly improve the lot of the mass of the people even under capitalism. Free Transport, Co-operative Organisation of Unemployed Labour on the Land and in the Factory, Free Maintenance of Children, Construction of Healthy Dwellings for the People, the slums being swept away—these and other measures palliative of competitive anarchy would, so we contended, do far more to arrest degeneration, develop profitable industry, and build up a wholesome system for the coming generation than all the burden-shifting that ever was advocated. Of course nothing positive came of our counter-agitation.

Though the time was ripe for dealing with the situation even from the landlord and capitalist point of view, and such a policy as I propounded —in particular, free transport of goods and the systematic feeding, clothing, training, education, and general individual uplifting of the children as free and capable citizens of a free and organised nation, —would have removed the carapace of economic repression which was crushing out the life of our country, neither the dominant classes nor the people were prepared to embrace the opportunity. Consequently, in spite of crowded and enthusiastic meetings and a steady growth of Socialist opinion, nothing effective was done. Mr. Chamberlain's Protection propaganda, of course, remained as useless as his Ransom rhetoric.

Having for very many years taken a deep interest in the affairs of the East, it was natural

that I should do my best to understand what was likely to be the outcome of the differences between Russia and Japan. It seemed at first incredible that with all the internal troubles she had to encounter and the question of China's future staring her in the face, the Russian Government should be drawn into hostilities with the other coming power on the East Pacific Ocean. But just as the greedy persistence and dexterous corruption of the gang of international exploiters in the Transvaal dragged Great Britain into the war in South Africa, so the wholesale robbery and piracy of the Grand Dukes and their international financiers brought about the campaign between Russia and Japan. That the destinies of great nations should still be thus mishandled and their peoples injured by hostilities and over-taxed by costs of war in the interest of a small minority, is one of the wonders of our time. In this case also it is certain that the Czar of Russia was just as much opposed to the war as had been Queen Victoria and the Prince of Wales. In both cases greedy money-getters and incompetent Ministers brought about the campaign in spite of the opinions and wishes of their nominal chiefs.

At that time I hoped and believed that if Russia were thoroughly beaten the reactionary war cloud, to use Stepniak's expression, would be lifted off Eastern Europe and that Russia herself might, in consequence of such defeat, be relieved from the terrible despotism which oppressed her. I formed also a much higher opinion of Japan and its government than has since been justified. But in regard to the immediate issue of the war I learned all there was to be learned from men who had lived in Japan for many years, from military officers who had been with the Japanese contingent at work in China, and from naval authorities who had seen practically all there was to see of the Japanese

fleet, both in the war with China before Japan had created a really powerful navy and more recently when she had. All were agreed that under the circumstances Japan could not fail to win unless Russia displayed altogether unexpected powers of endurance at the end of a long and unsatisfactory line of communications. Japan was quite ready. Russia was not. Of that I was convinced.

It was in relation to this that I had a strange experience of the abiding disinclination even of highly educated Frenchmen holding important positions to accept truths which they do not want to know. The tale of Colonel Stoffel's reports with reference to the German army prior to the Franco-German War of 1870 was very nearly retold in 1903, happily not with such disastrous results for France. I have good reason to think, that is to say, that France was perfectly well served by her own agents and that her Government was warned by her military and naval attachés in the Far East as to what was likely to occur. But in spite of this the universal opinion in Paris was that Japan would certainly get the worst of it.

So it chanced that when the great war between Russia and Japan began my wife and I went out to dinner with some old friends in the Boulevard Haussmann. It was a charming party, as such domestic parties in my experience in France always are. There were present some very capable men and women; among the former two military officers of distinction. Said my wife to me as we went up in the lift, "Now, mind, you mustn't say a word about Russia and Japan." Not a wholly unnecessary caution, as I was full of the subject and this was the 30th April 1903. I was as good as gold. Not a syllable did I breathe on the question during dinner, nor when coffee and cigars occupied our attention. I thought I had escaped. My wife

looked quite pleased at my unusual reticence, not to say prudence. Then all of a sudden I was plunged right into the forbidden subject. One of the officers, "after compliments," as the Indian despatches to native rulers read, asked me point-blank what I thought about the prospects of the war. I said that I really had not studied the matter closely, and that I was not capable of giving a sound opinion. Again I thought I had got out of it handsomely, knowing quite well what view my fellow-guests took of the whole affair. Unluckily for me, a lady present had read an article of mine somewhere, in which I had done my best to set out the facts on both sides, and at the end drew a conclusion. Then I was in for it. I was literally forced to argue the issue out. In spite of all I could do to hold back, they insisted on being given my opinion. And at last I told them what I could not doubt would be the result. Then the whole party was very polite but at bottom very angry: the more angry that they all had a shrewd suspicion I was right. And yet, as they knew very well, I was a vigorous Francophil and, opposed as I might be to Russia, desired nothing which could be harmful to France. When we wished one another good-night and left, our parting was exceedingly cold, and even our host and his family could scarcely disguise their chagrin that I should have told them gently what I held to be the plain truth. That very night the Japanese crossed the Yalu river, and won the first serious engagement of the campaign. It was one succession of victories for Japan and defeats for France's ally all through.

When in the heat of the campaign Katayama, the Japanese, and Plechanoff, the Russian, shook hands amid tremendous applause at the Socialist Congress of Amsterdam, this dinner party and its

concluding incidents recurred to my mind. Sad to say, though Russia did, in consequence of her disasters, take a step forwards towards political emancipation and better social conditions, the improvement was very short-lived. Reaction now again rules supreme, and the Duma exists only on sufferance and with the mere simulacrum of power or authority. Victory for Japan likewise has not benefited her people or raised her to a higher plane of civilisation—far from it.

The interior condition of Japan is much worse to-day than it was before the war. Sweating of infants of the most hideous character, similar to what went on in this country before the Factory Acts or to that which now obtains in the Southern States of the great American Republic, is the rule. Socialists are arrested, imprisoned, and even executed for exposing these infamies. The annexation of Korea has been carried out with an amount of ruthless cruelty scarcely surpassed by the French in Morocco, by the Germans at Kiaou-Chiaou, by the Belgians in the Congo, or by ourselves towards the aborigines of Australia or the inhabitants of the Soudan. Some of us hoped that Japan having leaped from Feudalism into Capitalism within a period of forty years would learn by the experience of Western Europe, and would avert from her people the horrors of the wage-earning form of human slavery. It has not been so. The Japanese Government so far has only adopted from Europe the most improved methods of slaughter on the field and of exploitation in the factory; while the contrast between the commercial methods of our Eastern ally and those of the high-toned merchants and traders of China is the talk of the world. Of the two countries, in fact, Russia the defeated is better off than Japan the victorious.

CHAPTER II

MICHAEL DAVITT

Of all the men possessed of no conspicuous mental ability, and with no advantages of birth to aid them, who gained great influence over their fellows during the last century, by sheer force of moral worth and nobility of character, it seems to me that Giuseppe Garibaldi and Michael Davitt stand in the front rank. The former has always been fully appreciated in this country: the latter has not as yet gained the position in public estimation which is his due. This, perhaps, is natural. The great Italian fought gloriously for the complete emancipation of his country from foreign rule, in such wise as to gain for himself the cordial admiration, not to say the affection, of all Englishmen of advanced views. Even the governing minority here, as they lost nothing by Garibaldi's success and the creation of a United Italy, could afford to admire heroism and self-sacrifice in a cause which cost them cheap sympathy only.

But the great Irishman was also engaged throughout his life in one continuous endeavour to overthrow an equally pernicious dominance over Ireland. This was quite another matter. Carrying on his uphill and almost hopeless struggle against Great Britain, under conditions where open fighting on the field of battle was hopeless and even impossible, political and social

conspiracy he thought at first was the only means of achieving his end. The Irish patriot, therefore, found himself not only opposed to the British rule in Ireland but in bitter antagonism to the interests of the landlords in England, who felt that the threat to landed property across the Irish Channel might soon jeopardise their private ownership of the soil in England, Wales, and Scotland. The antagonism to Davitt, consequently, was even more economic than political. Home Rule in Davitt's mouth meant first and foremost the land of Ireland for the people of Ireland, prior to the political emancipation of Ireland. To our possessing classes, therefore, Davitt's was the most sinister figure of the whole Irish movement. He was classed by them with the dynamiters whom he opposed and the assassins whose weapons he tried by his agitation to blunt. Having failed to take his life in gaol, which it can scarcely be doubted was the intention, regard being had to the treatment to which he was subjected, not content with again throwing him into prison, they persistently misrepresented this noble man and did their utmost to blacken his character.

Davitt's family, like many thousands of others, was forced to leave Ireland by the series of evictions of the peasantry which followed upon the frightful famine of 1847, in order that grazing land might replace tillage. Turned out of house and home, their cottage battered down before their eyes, Davitt's father and mother with their children sought refuge at Haslingden in 1852. Davitt was then a boy of six and was soon drafted into the slavery of an English cotton-mill, the beggarly wage for his child-labour being needed to bring the remuneration of the whole family up to bare subsistence level. A few years later, when he remonstrated against being put to do work in the mill, for which he was wholly unfitted by his youth,

inexperience, and lack of sufficient strength, he was knocked about by a brutal overseer and kicked into the machinery. He could not be released before his right arm was so mangled that it had to be amputated. So that the future hero of the Irish revolt entered upon life a cripple: a victim of landlordism in Ireland and of capitalism in England.

Naturally enough, with the remembrance of the wrongs of his race constantly brought before his youthful mind by his mother, and the antagonism to the Irish ever present around him in his neighbourhood, he drifted at the age of twenty-four into the Fenian movement. Some of his associates fell into a police trap and, though Davitt himself was not guilty of complicity in any serious plot, the cowardice and treachery of one of his companions caused him to be found guilty of the newly invented crime of treason-felony, by which political prisoners have been put on the same footing as men who have committed the foulest criminal offences.

It is horrible to read even now of the tortures to which this high-minded young Irishman, having only his left arm to work with, was subjected by the Liberal Government in Milbank and Portland. Many of the Fenian prisoners were deliberately driven mad in the former prison, and the wonder is that Davitt's mind did not succumb to the frightful treatment to which he and the others were subjected. Permanent solitary confinement, with very bad and insufficient food; compelled with his one hand to do the same amount of oakum-picking as prisoners who were unmaimed and were used to the work; placed, alike waking and sleeping, in such a posture for a man of his height as to be subjected to one continual torture; with a Westminster clock breaking in every quarter

of an hour with a bar of the Old Hundredth to strain his shattered nerves—all this was indeed a terrible experience for an English political prisoner within a stone's throw of the Mother of Parliaments.

At Dartmoor the prison conditions were almost as bad, and the food was even worse. It is not too much to say that Davitt's fellow-prisoner M'Carthy was actually tortured to death in this prison. The work to which Davitt was set, also, in that place of confinement for atrocious criminals, was not only distressing but actually revolting: one of his tasks being to pound up decaying bones for manure in a stifling atmosphere during the height of summer. Throughout, no allowance whatever was made for him on account of his being a cripple. A plain unvarnished account of the daily life of Davitt in Dartmoor is, in fact, enough to make any Irishman, or any Englishman for that matter, register a vow of undying hatred and revenge against those who were guilty of, or those who condone, such infamy.

Yet the remarkable part of the matter is that Michael Davitt himself bore his inhuman gaolers, and the politicians who gave them their orders, no personal ill-will. His was the most forgiving nature I ever encountered in the whole course of my life. Talking with him about his sufferings at this time and afterwards in the most familiar way, at periods when his health was manifestly weakened from the trials he had undergone, I never heard Davitt denounce the individuals who had maltreated him. If I tried to stir up in him some of the resentment I felt myself against these ruffians above and below, who had so misused him, he always had a word of excuse even for the most brutal of his gaolers. And this was no pose with him at all. In the very widest sense he lived in charity with

all men, even with those who had most despitefully used him and persecuted him. As I used to tell him, I could never under any circumstances have risen to this height of moral grandeur. No length of time would have obliterated from my mind the remembrance of these unforgettable injuries, and I should have considered I had misspent my life if I had gone to my grave without getting even with some at least of the worst of my torturers. But with Davitt it was not so. Nay, he really did return good for evil to those who had maltreated him, and when he himself gained influence, actually helped more than one of these miscreants to better positions in life. This last piece of ethical magnanimity made me downright furious, and I denounced him with all the vigour at my command for what seemed to me a complete mania for rewarding the unworthy. But Davitt only laughed and charged me with being more bitter in his cause than he was himself, which he averred I had no right to be. I am not so sure about that, with a man of his almost unreasoning charity towards the worst of his enemies.

When Sir William Harcourt seized this noble Irishman and put him back in gaol, on the pretext that he had broken the terms of his ticket-of-leave, no one felt more furious than I did. It was as silly as it was cowardly on the part of the English Home Secretary to imprison Davitt at this time. Possibly this may have occurred to him when, if he went out to dinner, he thought it indispensable to have four private detectives in the house and four more out on the pavement below the windows, in order to protect his precious life against the dynamiters who had taken, or who Sir William thought had taken, the place of Davitt's formidable but pacific propaganda. This treatment of Davitt again, with the arrest of Parnell and the

incarceration at the same time of large numbers of the most patriotic Irishmen, has always seemed to me conclusive evidence of England's utter incapacity to deal with the sister island.

It was after Davitt's release from this imprisonment that I got to know him very well, and we became intimate friends. His was a striking figure. His face was that of a humanised and benignant raven. Dark gleaming eyes, a prominent nose, black hair and beard, he might well appear, with his tall athletic frame and vehement speech and gestures, a formidable personage to his opponents. The empty sleeve where his right arm should have been gave a touch of pathos to the picture, while his career might well have excused him, as already said, for showing far more bitterness than he ever displayed. As a member of the Irish Land League myself, I had better opportunities than most Englishmen of judging of the splendid, ungrudging and self-sacrificing services Davitt rendered to his country. Though during the whole of the early period of our friendship, and even to nearly the close of his life, Davitt was always struggling against poverty and was very badly paid for the journalistic and lecturing work which he did, he rarely or never complained of his lot. It is perhaps fair to say that Davitt was neither a great writer nor a great speaker. What he lacked in both departments I scarcely know; but somehow he never seemed as interesting in either as he was in himself as a personality or in his private conversation. In these respects he left little to desire.

I felt this lack of oratorical faculty rather keenly on one occasion. My old friend Gowen Evans had asked me to dine at the Reform Club to meet some well-known men whom I was particularly anxious to chat with, including two or

three I had known intimately in Australia. Unfortunately, Davitt was to speak on that same night about Land Nationalisation in St. James's Hall, and I had promised to support him on the platform, an engagement which I felt I could not break in loyalty to Davitt. So I withstood temptation and refused to be beguiled with the flesh-pots of the Reform Club. But in those days I had, horrible as it may seem, the reputation of being able to order dinner with a certain amount of gustatory acumen and even originality. As, therefore, I would not go to the feast to which I was bidden, Evans insisted that I should go down to the Club in his company and order it.

The chef was, I learned, a Frenchman, and I requested that I should have the honour of being presented to him, a function which Evans discharged in due form. My conference with His Eminence of the white beretta and white apron was lengthy and important. I treated him with the deference due to his exalted position: he was good enough to recognise that I had a fair smattering, as a mere Englishman, of the art in which he excelled. We parted with mutual respect — he confident of success and gratified at my appreciation of his capacity to carry out my humble suggestions, I rejoiced at having been of service to my friend, but a trifle saddened at not being able myself to test the results of our joint ingenuity and to enjoy the interesting conversation that would follow.

I thought of this as I sat on the platform and listened to Davitt's discourse on the single-tax nostrum which he always designated Land Nationalisation. Production was entirely over-looked. The whole problem was regarded from the fiscal side, and a great calculation was made as to what could be done with the millions paid as rent, if they were applied to benefit the people instead

of being appropriated by a class. That confiscation of rent was not nationalisation of the land, no matter how the money might be disposed of, and that competition under capitalism would continue, even if this confiscation were achieved, were points that appeared to Davitt of small importance, if he thought of them at all. I was, I confess, a little bored with it all, as I had previously been with Henry George's exposition of the same views. But Davitt was so thoroughly in earnest and so convinced that he had got hold of the real remedy for all our social ills that I congratulated him heartily on the platform success which he undoubtedly achieved, and went off into the other camp. There I was received with a burst of applause as, if not the begetter, at any rate the orderer of the feast, which was declared to have been a huge success. How I could prefer the dry oratory of Piccadilly to the pleasing menu of Pall Mall puzzled the party.

That Reform Club itself, on the other hand, has always puzzled me. Though the gathering that evening was in every way agreeable, and host and guests were wide-minded and capable people, there was no disguising the fact that on all social questions they were out-and-out reactionaries and regarded my Socialist views as evidence of sheer lunacy, inexplicable in a man who could put together a well-composed menu of succulent dishes with their attendant wines. It so chanced also that the day Sir William Harcourt was beaten for Oxford by Mr. Agg-Gardner, I was dining in the Strangers' Room at the Reform Club, being one of quite a large party, of which not a few of the guests were members of the Club. The result, so discouraging to Liberals, was received with almost universal jubilation round the table, and when a band, doubtless subsidised from the adjacent

Carlton Club, came by, playing the "Rogue's March," the guests cheered and drank Agg-Gardner's health. I have always been of opinion that the Reform Club, except in matters of Free Trade, which have no real significance for the working class, is more reactionary than the Carlton. The atmosphere of the place is essentially that of a Whiggery, and its influence has been injurious as long as I can remember. That Davitt was a man worthy of the highest regard, who would rank in the future as one of the greatest men of the time, by sheer force of character and self-sacrifice, and that to honour him was to honour oneself, were conceptions quite outside the range of the much cleverer fellows than Davitt whom Gowen Evans had gathered together that night.

The Irish Land League has now lost its interest. Some of the objects it was founded to achieve have been attained, and for a quarter of a century mere politicians of a very inferior type have lived comfortably in the House of Commons on the memory of the work done by Davitt and Parnell—work which it is very doubtful whether these new leaders have ever really desired to carry to full fruition. But the Land League, as Davitt conceived it and organised it, was a marvellous feat none the less. For Davitt had to fight, almost single-handed, not only against the landlords but against the Catholic priesthood who, while posing as patriots, were little better than what Davitt at times called them, "the English garrison in Ireland." How Michael Davitt, himself a man of strong religious feeling, could have mustered up courage and strength to oppose successfully and overmaster, for the time being, in Ireland a greater and far older organisation than his own is one of the marvels of his career. It would have been impossible had he not been able by sheer power of

enthusiasm and moral conviction to inspire the millions of Irish people in America and in Great Britain itself with some of his own invincible optimism and unshakable persistence—had he not also found a kindred spirit in Patrick Ford of the *Irish World*.

The fatal memories of 1847 with all its horrors were reawakened, and a systematic campaign against English rule in Ireland brought in money support, which was essential to even partial success. Thousands upon thousands of pounds were collected, and branches were formed in places where no political or social movement had existed before. Davitt never spared himself in any way, and risked his health by overwork and his life by his opposition to certain extremists, in a manner which amazed all who knew what he was doing. And all the time he remained as he had begun, a very poor man. Even when he had scraped £4000 together by lecturing on his own account in Australia, he turned every farthing of it over to the National League, which had run short of funds and needed the money, thus putting himself again in the precarious position of being dependent on his pen for subsistence. Then he started a Labour paper, the *Labour World*, in London, which could not by any possibility have succeeded in a pecuniary sense, if Davitt had possessed the managerial capacity of a Villemessant in addition to the vigour and originality of a Cobbett. But he lived and worked and made friends and enemies, and had the satisfaction of helping on that sort of half-hearted and less than half-minded movement towards emancipation for which alone the people of this island then seemed ready.

But perhaps the most interesting episode, even in Davitt's stirring career, was his tremendous

effort against the *Times*, arising out of the publication of the Pigott forgeries and the Commission which followed. I had from Davitt himself an elaborate and detailed account of the whole matter on a very long railway journey we took together. For my part I could never understand why either Parnell or Davitt should have been so desperately anxious to disassociate themselves from any connection with the dynamite section of the Irish revolt. It is natural and inevitable in any country, or among any class, where the desire for emancipation from foreign or domestic tyranny is strongly manifested, and the dominant minority crushes down free speech and free writing, that an extreme party should rise up, determined to try once more, under such circumstances, the effect of outrage and assassination; as this sort of warfare is called by those against whose despotism it is directed.

If Parnell did not know what was going on in this direction, then he ought to have done so; and if he did not to some extent sympathise with the patriotic if misguided desperadoes who were risking their lives by the propaganda of deed in the cause which he was more safely and pacifically conducting in politics, then he was more or less than man.

Davitt's position was different. He had been a Fenian in his youth: he had believed that Ireland might be freed by secret conspiracy, culminating in organised violence. He founded the Land League, because he became convinced that this was the more excellent way, and that dynamite attacks, however successful for the time being, would not bring about the great change at which he aimed, and must in any event turn against Irish emancipators the feelings of the English people. To him, therefore, even more than to Parnell, the issue of the Commission was important.

It is my opinion that had the *Times* conducted

its case with anything approaching to the ability and astuteness the circumstances called for, that journal would have won, and that in that case the need for the Pigott Letters, forged or unforged, would never have existed. Not that Parnell or Davitt actually encouraged dynamite explosions or Phœnix Park assassinations; but it would have been so easy with the evidence at hand to prove that certain persons connected with the Land League were privy to the more dangerous conspiracy, that public opinion and the Commission itself would have refused to believe in Parnell's innocence. As it was, the Pigott Letters and the extraordinary doings in America and here in England turned everybody who was not a mere bigot in favour of Parnell.

Extraordinary doings in America, I say—extraordinary indeed. Did you ever see the old Palais Royal farce of *Tricoche et Cacolet* forty years ago? If not, and you get a chance of seeing it well played, do so. The story Davitt told me of the intrigues and counter-intrigues of the *Times* agents and the Land Leaguers rivals the adventures of those two mirth-provoking detectives. The *Times* people carefully bribed a most desperate fellow who was ready to disclose everything. A horrible tale this worthy had to tell, which was duly cabled over to the *Times* solicitors. Suspicion was somehow awakened, and the valuable witness was found to have come with a cock-and-bull story straight out of the enemy's camp.

Then some capable person was put on to the job, who used the wires freely with an elaborate cypher. This would never do. The wires were tapped, the cypher discovered by ingenuity or bribery, and again the whole thing was terribly mixed up for the accusers. Sympathy on "the other side" was all in favour of Davitt, Patrick Ford and their friends,

and all against the great English journal. So in the end the *Times* people found out just what they were intended to find out and no more. I have never been able to understand why Mr. Walter, who had so much at stake in the matter, entrusted the management of this important case to a highly respectable solicitor, with no experience whatever of this desperately difficult sort of business; nor why even this solicitor, incompetent as he might be, refrained from subpœnaing certain persons, English as well as Irish, who would pretty certainly have left the country rather than give evidence. I presume overweening confidence in Pigott wrecked their judgment in every way. Davitt himself was of that opinion, though he thought Parnell would have won in any event.

As a member of the Irish Land League and of the Central Executive of the Land League of Great Britain, I of course took a deep interest in all this. I did not care much for Parnell's purely political action, nor did I believe it could be successful, as I said in my letter of resignation to the *Irish World* some time before. But a Home Ruler and a Land Nationaliser I was all the time. The following incident, however, was very strange, and neither Davitt nor any one else ever explained it to me. On the one hand, it seemed impossible that, however contemptuous and distrustful I may have felt towards some of the self-seeking political intriguers of the Irish party, it could be thought I should injure a cause for which I had spent a good deal of money and had run considerable risk; and, on the other hand, it appeared unlikely that the final decision on such an important matter should have been entrusted to me by any Irish section.

At any rate this is what occurred. I was sitting in the S.D.F. offices at Bridge Street,

Blackfriars, where our headquarters then were, several members of the body who had been with me having just left, when a man whom I had never seen before came straight into the inner room, closing the door behind him. I was not unaccustomed to this sort of thing, so I showed no surprise, but asked my visitor, who I thought had watched the premises so as to be sure of finding me alone, what he wanted. "You are Mr. Hyndman?" I said I was. "My name is ——," and he mentioned a name well known in the extreme Irish section, but which I do not care to give even now, "and I have come to take your advice." "On what matter?" "On a very important matter indeed." "But who sent you to me on such an errand? I don't think I ever saw you before." "Those who sent me know what they are about." "But will you take my advice if I give it?" "That's what I am here for. When you know just how I am fixed"—it was the only Americanism he used—"and tell me what I ought to do, I shall do it." "Very well; let me hear your story."

He sat down. "I am in the pay of the *Times*." "That is a good beginning," I said, smiling. "Yes," he answered quite gravely, "I am in the pay of the *Times*, and I have been getting twenty pounds a week from them for the last two months. I came to London two days ago, and now I have run away." "Well?" "You know who I am now I have told you my name." I said I did. "And you can see I should be an uncommonly awkward witness against Parnell." I replied that quite possibly he might be. "More than that, you know I should be. What I want to ask you is, whether I shall stay and go into the box, or whether, now I have slipped them, I shall go off in the Atlantic Transport boat which leaves

for New York to-morrow morning? We know you don't care much for Parnell's tactics in these days."

Whatever might have been his object, the man was undoubtedly in earnest, and I knew enough of what had been going on to believe that he had information at his command which might seriously affect the issue being tried. I had no doubt at all as to what my advice would be; but I reflected for a moment as to how I should give it, especially as I thought then, and think now, that my strange visitor was acting in perfect good faith. "Supposing you were to give the evidence you are capable of giving, and it had all the effect you feel confident it would have, who do you think would benefit by it?" "The *Times* and the Unionists, of course. There can be no doubt about that." "But much as you may question the soundness of Parnell's whole policy, that must be in the main a victory for the landlord party and the enemies of Ireland." "Yes, though I think Parnell is our enemy too." "But not in a position to hurt you so much." "Then you advise me to go to America to-morrow morning?" "Certainly I do." "In that case I shall go."

I wished him good-bye, and I have never seen or heard of him from that day to this, though I have good reason to believe he sailed in the vessel he spoke of, and duly landed in New York. Furthermore, from inquiries I made I came to the conclusion that he *had* accepted pay from the *Times*, and that he had been allowed to get away shortly after reaching London. Altogether it was a very funny business. I have had many stranger and far more dangerous, for in this there was no risk, interviews than this, but none that appeared to me more unnecessary on the part of the individual who came to see me, or the people

who suggested to him to come. Possibly it was all done to test my good faith.

When Davitt was returned to the House of Commons I used to see a good deal of him. He detested the atmosphere of the House, and disliked the detached, comfortable, man-of-the-world methods of the Irish members, and their cynical views of life. In fact he never "caught the tone of the House," as some of our Labour men pride themselves on having done. With his honest, clear-sighted eyes he saw clean through the trickeries and sham-fightings of the political parties, including that to which he nominally belonged. But he thought at first too well of the men, as men, and believed that, like himself, they would free themselves from the trammels of Parliamentary tradition, if they could, and come out boldly on the side of the people. When he found that, from whatever cause, they would do nothing of the sort, and that he virtually stood alone in his anxiety to be up and doing, regardless of immediate consequences, he at once decided to clear out of the House of Commons altogether. I did my very utmost to dissuade him from taking this course.

I urged that everything must have a beginning; that even one honest, capable representative in the House, unfettered by party ties and utterly indifferent to society, was better than none; that the opportunity when he could make himself felt and be certain of vigorous backing from without was sure to come; and that his mere presence there was a restraint upon evil-doers and a perpetual protest against intrigue. It was all to no purpose. Resign his seat he would. The best I could do was to obtain from him a pledge that if I myself ever got into the House of Commons he would at once try again for an Irish seat, and if successful

we would fight the battle together. That was the arrangement between us to his dying day.

But he was very catholic in his sympathies, I must say. He never would believe what I told him about John Burns, for example—that he was merely a self-seeker, whose one object it was to get well-paid office on one side or the other, and that, moreover, he had no high faculties at all. So, after having backed me most vigorously at Burnley, he went over post-haste to Battersea to support the present President of the Local Government Board. That Davitt with all his fervour and good-fellowship failed to secure me the Irish vote at Burnley was only to be expected. The priests and Mr. T. P. O'Connor were too much for him. Neither ecclesiastics nor "politicians" can endure independence of thought or of action. Only in stirring times can a man of Davitt's mould overmaster such people.

Davitt married a Californian lady of some means and larger expectations, and though his wife was a devoted, not to say a bigoted, Catholic, he appears to have lived a happy domestic life with her at Land League Cottage, Ballybrack, and he certainly thought and spoke a good deal of her and his children. But he was in nowise relieved from the necessity for work. I was going on an important matter of business by way of Paris to Buda-Pest, and on leaving Paris, some friends came to the station to see me off. I got up on to the train to secure my berth in the sleeping-car which I had engaged, and I saw on the seat opposite to mine a small portmanteau with the name "M. Davitt" upon it in large black letters. There is and can be only one M. Davitt in Europe, thought I, and I told my French friends that in a few minutes they would see the famous Irish agitator. Sure enough, a moment or two before the train started

Davitt made his appearance, and my friends and our fellow-passengers were astonished to see two elderly and apparently sane travellers suddenly set to work to dance a fandango of jubilation in the corridor of the sleeping-car. It was indeed a joyful meeting.

Davitt was on his way to Constantinople and Odessa in order to report on the recent "pogroms" of the Jews at Kischeneff; so we had a full forty hours of journey together, which gave me a good chance of a private talk. The first words he said, after we had settled ourselves into our seats on leaving the station, were: "We might swear all the oaths we liked, Hyndman, but there is not a police bureau in Europe would believe that this is an accidental meeting." Purely accidental meeting it was, however, and one very delightful to me. Davitt spoke more freely of his career and of his personal feelings and domestic joys and troubles than he had ever spoken to me of them before, told me also, as I have already said, much about that bitter but amusing struggle against the *Times* in America. He was in very good spirits, but assured me it was quite a mistake to imagine, as some took it for granted, that he had married an heiress, and was now well off. "It is all we can do to keep a comfortable roof over our heads, and give our children a decent education. That is why I am off on this trip"; which itself, so far as I could learn, was none too well paid, considering the arduous and distressing character of the work to be done.

And so we talked and journeyed on, hour after hour, looking back at the past and making hopeful forecasts for the future as we traversed the lovely country through which the railway passes from Munich on to Vienna. Davitt was never tired of pointing out to me the picturesque, prosperous-

looking villages along the route, instancing them as evidence of what a rightful system of land-owning might result in, and how happy and well an independent peasantry might be. He would not listen to me when I urged that Austria, to say nothing of Bavaria, had also her serious troubles with the land, and that the condition of the agriculturists was not to be gauged by the charming appearance of their villages perched on the hills, or straggling along the roadside in the beautiful country. Davitt had still all the strong feeling of his ancestry in favour of actual ownership of small plots of land, and took it for granted that this system must everywhere be advantageous.

Now, too, I found out that Davitt looked farther back in the history of his own family than to his immediate forbears, the peasants and cottiers and rent-paying small-holders who had been so cruelly used and brought to so sad an end. There was the old sept loyalty to his tribe and gens still lingering in him, and he spoke of the Davitts of old times who had been chiefs and princes in the South, of the glories of educated Ireland, what time the Emerald Isle sent forth her Christian missionaries all over Europe in brotherly religious rivalry with the monks of Iona. The deep melancholy of Ireland's sad past and the deeper depression of her sad present found echo and expression in Davitt's eyes and voice.

He looked for her early resurrection and for the simultaneous awakening of England to the great destinies lying ahead of her. With all his Celtic gloom at times, Davitt was really much more optimistic than I. He would never accept Socialism as possible of realisation, never perhaps understood what it meant. So he had a Utopia of his own for Ireland and other countries, which he could place quite close to him and work out

comfortably in detail. Whereas I, knowing right well that by far the greatest Social Revolution of all the ages could not be nicely arranged between luncheon and dinner, so to say, was accused of being optimistic because I deliberately shut my eyes to obstacles, in order that others should not feel discouraged. And so we discoursed of many things and many men from Munich unto Vienna, and for the last four crowded-up hours from Vienna even unto Buda-Pest, where I myself left to plunge into the muddy water of capitalism; and he went on to inquire why Jews should still undergo medieval tortures in the twentieth century in Russia.

By the way, it was on this journey that Davitt told me that Colonel Villebois de Mareuil had accepted his views at last, as to the desirability of recruiting a "Legion of the Lost" under the French flag and bringing them out to help the Boers. I know it is commonly stated that Davitt and de Mareuil never came to terms about this highly adventurous and, indeed, desperate scheme, which, if successful, could scarcely have failed to bring a European Power into the fray. But Davitt gave me distinctly to understand that the Colonel just before his death had given in his adhesion to the plan proposed. Davitt, of course, was an open enemy of England in this infamous war, and, owing us no allegiance whatever, was perfectly justified in siding with the Boers against our army. Under the leadership of a man like de Mareuil a powerful force, such as it was contemplated to ship and land, might have turned the scale against the invaders; and if it had been attacked at sea or not permitted to come ashore, complications would almost certainly have followed. This was the calculation, and Davitt at least believed it would have been verified.

On his return from Kischeneff, Davitt, while denouncing the horrors of the massacres, had been convinced, it seemed to me, by his talks with Trepoff and others that the Jews played so ugly a part in Russian rural life that it was easy to rouse unappeasable hatred against the whole of the race by reason of the economic action of the money-lending few; that in fact the feeling towards the Jews in Russia on the part of the peasantry was not very different from that of the ryots of India in many districts towards the bunias, shroffs, or marwarries, men of the same race as the ryots themselves, who play the like usurious part.

Undoubtedly, Davitt in private, while not excusing the Russian authorities, felt that Russia would be much better off if she had no Jews at all within her boundaries. And as he spoke thus I could not but recall a graphic story told at our table by Dr. Rudolph Meyer of a ragged, half-starved Jew arriving in a Russian village, up to that date a fairly well-to-do community as such villages go. Within a few years this Jew, to use Marx's phrase, had eaten into the pores of this simple society. Everything had become his, and the peasants themselves, with their families, were little better than his slaves. It was the old, old story of debtor and creditor, which well-nigh wrecked some of the greatest societies of ancient times. Perhaps the Irish feeling against the gombeen man made Davitt less bitter than he would otherwise have been against the slaughterers of Jews.

A few years later came what was to me the saddest part of Davitt's life: its end just as he was in a position to feel at ease in money matters, and was making ready to enjoy his last few years by travelling just when and where and how it suited him. He called to see us before he started, to tell us of the change in his fortunes. "The old lady,"

his wife's aunt, "had a fortune of £90,000. The priests obtained two-thirds of it, and had she lived a few months more I verily believe they would have got the rest. As it happened, she died worth £30,000, and this my wife inherited. Thus all my family are now well provided for, and I feel a free man for the first time in my life." And then he went on to tell us of the tour he had charted out for himself, and how delightful it would be for him to go on or stop, travel fast or travel slow, just as the humour seized him. His first journey would be through South America. He was quite young again at the prospect. Never had I seen him look better, fuller of life, or more certain of attaining to a good old age. We wished him heartily "bon voyage," and begged him to write us a line now and then, or to send us a picture-card on his travels. His hearty farewell rings still in my ears. He went over to Ireland to make his final arrangements for starting, had trouble with his teeth, owing to abominable ill-usage in gaol years before, got blood-poisoning, and died.

No nobler character ever fought for the independence and wellbeing of his country than Michael Davitt. He is fully entitled to a foremost place among the martyrs of his race. If he did not actually die for Ireland, he undoubtedly lived for her, and underwent for the sake of his fellow-countrymen sufferings worse considerably than mere death. Death, indeed, is a mere incident in the career of a man like Davitt, and not by any means the most important incident either. True, viewed from the standpoint of Socialism and political economy, his theories were unsound and his proposals in some respects reactionary. True, also, that in politics his almost aggressive honesty, contempt for compromise, and hatred of shams, induced him to give up a position in which he might have

done great service, while his inherited abhorrence of sexual laxity drew him into mistaken and injurious action towards Parnell. At times, too, it may be that he manifested some little self-consciousness in regard to the important part he had played. But these are indeed trifling errors in the course of a great career, and it will be well for Ireland, in the difficult and possibly dangerous days of national reorganisation which are approaching, if she finds even a few of her sons who can partially emulate the high example set them by Michael Davitt.

CHAPTER III

CONTESTED ELECTIONS

Social-Democrats are opposed to one of their number taking office in any Ministry of the governing class. In fact it has been declared by solemn decision of International Congresses that no man can do so except with the consent and at the wish of the party as a whole. Why, then, should a Socialist attempt to enter Parliament, which is manifestly nowadays a capitalist institution, or to sit upon a Municipal Council, which is quite as much dominated by the same influence?

The answer is, of course, easy, and to my mind quite sufficient. As Wendell Phillips said in one of his finest orations, we are living not in a college, or in a monastery, but in the world. Regardless, therefore, of strict logic, we have to make use of such opportunities of spreading our theories, and partially applying our principles, as we can command. In fact, just as the moneyed and middle class gradually made itself felt in the Parliament of the nobles and landowners, while their economic position and social status were gaining ground outside; so the wage-earning class, with a definite clear-cut consciousness of working-class subordination under existing conditions, may push its claims to the front in the modern capitalist Assembly, while the inevitable progress of events outside is helping it to achieve an even stronger posi-

tion in the mills and factories, as well as in the streets.

As members of Municipal Councils, on the other hand, Socialists might learn the practice of administration, introduce a few half-way palliative measures even in the midst of existing municipal anarchy and corruption, and make ready the period of which Bronterre O'Brien spoke when a nucleus of determined men in all the great industrial centres would be able, in a moment of crisis, to paralyse the bourgeoisie. Moreover, no party of the people can be effectively active or even keep itself alive on abstractions and theories alone. Without a high ideal nothing great can be achieved, even if the economic and social development is understood. But without some immediate object to strive for, and some opportunity of testing growth and strength at intervals, it is impossible to keep men together.

As affairs go to-day the House of Commons is the best platform in the world, if used with vigour, tempered with reasonable discretion. For the House of Commons provides such a sounding board that every utterance of a speaker, when once he has made an impression, reaches far beyond the limits of the House itself, and gives him an influence at times greatly in excess of his ability at outside meetings. Therefore it is in the highest degree desirable that any cause which aspires to make its way among the people, and eventually to control, through its adherents, public affairs, should have its representatives and champions on the floor of the popular assembly long before the party based upon its principles is ready to organise and administer the public business of the community. It is quite true that none of the highest minds of the nation have ever devoted themselves to political life, or have regarded the party struggles

of their time as of the highest importance. This is true of Socialism as of other departments of human development. None of the real founders of Socialism in Europe, with perhaps two exceptions, have ever been engaged in politics. Possibly even they might have gained something by a closer touch with the actualities of life, as Gibbon declared his passing and superficial acquaintance with soldiering was of advantage to him in writing his great history.

My connection with the borough of Burnley began by my going over from Nelson or Colne, I forget which, and it does not in the least matter, on a propagandist mission in 1883 or 1884. I was warned solemnly when I thus went to speak there for the first time that I must not imagine for a moment that the Burnley workers were in any sense poor or depressed people. They earned, I was told, about the best wages of any Lancashire folk, they had fine Co-operative Stores, large sums of money, for them, in the Savings Banks, took a solid holiday at mid-summer extending over a full fortnight, for which period they heartily enjoyed themselves at Blackpool or some other pleasure resort, had good food, good clothing, and good housing, and altogether, being besides shrewd and fairly well educated, I should find them to be quite different from the working men and working women whom I had encountered in the South of England and even in other parts of Lancashire. So I really did enter the town with some trepidation. If the mill-hands and pitmen who formed the population of the place were so well-to-do as all this, my opinion that on the average the better paid and more intelligent the workers the more hopeful the outlook for Socialism, might receive a rude shock.

It did receive a rude shock, but scarcely in the

way I anticipated. Do you know Burnley? If not, don't. I do not say it is so wholly revolting a place as Dewsbury, or quite so depressing as Macclesfield, or so manifestly inhabited by inferior humans as parts of Manchester or Liverpool; but to any one who enters it as I did, under the impression that I was about to visit a clean, well-kept industrial centre such as Stuttgart or Cannstadt, it will look quite bad enough. Surrounded by fine breezy moors and beautiful valleys, with a district called in derision Rose Grove as one of its principal stations on the railway, there is no reason in the world but the frightful indifference of the dominant class to everything except the acquisition of profit why Burnley should not have been from the beginning a wholesome and happy town, in so far, at any rate, as the ordinary life of its inhabitants might be arranged, in "good times." As it was, I soon found out that Burnley was on a very slightly higher plane than the worst of the other cotton and coal towns.

At that time the reign of organised middle-class municipalism had barely begun. A huge engine, puffing, snorting, and blowing out clouds of smoke, dragged the tramcars along the rails—the entire system belonging to a private company, of which Councillors and Aldermen were the chief shareholders; the whole town was shrouded in semi-darkness owing to the practice of vomiting forth huge volumes of black half-consumed carbon from the factory chimneys without restraint; the housing of quite a large portion of the population was almost as abominable as in great areas of Liverpool; the infant mortality was so terrible that out of 1000 births only 500 attained the age of five years; half-time for children in the factories was still the rule, the limit of age being only eleven, and the parents themselves strongly supported this

ruinous sweating of their own flesh and blood; education was of the lowest character, and parents were fined if they did not send their children to the wretched schools and pay for their education, even if they had to deduct the fees from their absolutely necessary food; steaming in some of the sheds was carried to such an extent that the constitutions of the people who worked there were positively rotted out of them. In short, all the elements of a thoroughly degrading form of capitalist wage-slavery were present in the most revolting shape and forced themselves upon my attention.

I have used the past tense in writing of what I saw and investigated. I state no more than the exact truth when I say that in many respects matters are quite as bad, in some, perhaps, even worse, to-day. I shall never forget the first time when, in quest of a little fresh air, I walked up to the top of the Manchester Road and looked down upon Burnley from the hill-top. There it lay in the hollow, one hideous Malebolge of carbon-laden fog and smoke, the factory chimneys rising up above the mass of thick cloud like stakes upon which, as I said to my companion, successive generations of the workers and their children had been impaled. When I took Morris up to the same spot later, and we looked down together upon this infernal pit of human degradation, his language of denunciation of the system, and the classes who engendered and maintained such horrors, was nothing short of apocalyptic in its fury. For William Morris understood far better than Ruskin the causes which had led to this abysmal deterioration and misery and the manner in which alone they could be overcome and removed.

So this was the town in which I was warned to take heed to my parts of speech, and where I was told I should find a well-paid, capable, and self-

respecting community. Twenty-eight years at least have passed, during which period I have seen more of Burnley and have done more work in it than in any place in Great Britain, except London. Beginning by agitation in the open-air in the market-place, and going on until all Burnley was alive with Socialism, it is impossible to recognise an extent of improvement at all in proportion to the amount of work done and sacrifices made.

Yet, to begin with, there did seem likelihood of rapid progress. The pitmen had been on strike not very long after systematic agitation for Socialism began. Men who have now gone away, or who have altogether left the movement, or are dead, such as Widdup, Parrott, and others, had done admirable local work, and the old guard of the Lancashire movement—Horrocks, Evans, Massey, Hall—used to come over regularly from Manchester and Salford to Burnley, as to the other outlying towns, to preach the new gospel of Socialism. Those were the days when John Stuart Mill's confession of his conversion to Socialism, Henry George's *Progress and Poverty*, Gronlund's *Co-operative Commonwealth*—now almost forgotten—Bellamy's *Looking Backward*, as well as *The Summary of the Principles of Socialism*, *News from Nowhere*, *England for All*, and even the harder teachings of the *Capital* and the *Communist Manifesto* were discussed at the open-air meetings, not only in Burnley but all through Lancashire and the adjacent districts of Yorkshire. As a result of all this, following upon the strike of the colliers, we succeeded in returning two representatives of the miners, who had distinguished themselves by their vigour on behalf of their fellows as Social-Democrats, to the Burnley Municipal Council. This victory, coming hard upon all the abuse and vilification and other more material manifestations

of disagreement with our views, which we had all become accustomed to as inevitable concomitants of our apostolic preachings, perhaps unduly elated us.

We thought the workers, having put their hand to the revolutionary plough, would not look back. We forgot that the motive power must be continuous, not spasmodic, which shall conduct us to the end of our furrow. We overlooked the horses; or, to put it plainly, we did not fully appreciate the truth, which has been forced upon us ever since, that unless the mass of the people are really educated in Socialism and have learnt, in such thorough fashion that they cannot possibly clear their minds of the knowledge, how Liberals and Tories constitute merely two wings of the capitalist army which indulge in sham fights over political issues in order to divert the attention of the disinherited classes from the social matters which directly concern them — that until this amount of progress has been achieved, and the teaching has been completely assimilated and its results organised, the complete success of a thorough-going Socialist candidate against both parties is wellnigh impossible.

Not only so, but there is no continuous support or helpful outside counsel and criticism for those who, by the accident of temporary discontent and local revolt, are put forward successfully as representatives upon Municipal Councils or Committees. In this Burnley case the Municipal Councillors, Tempest and Sparling, were unduly blamed because they had not the power to impress themselves upon their fellow-members, when, as a matter of fact, had they gone vigorously forward, they would have found little backing among their fellow-townsmen so soon as the men had gone back to work.

However, by 1892, after nearly ten years of

continuous Socialist work, it was thought there was sufficient support in the place to justify a genuine Social-Democratic candidature. I was chosen as the—shall I say?—victim. The two parties were so solidly organised that the very idea of an independent Socialist opponent was scouted as ridiculous. Burnley was and always had been a thoroughly Radical constituency, and even the downfall of the sainted Jabez Balfour, who had carried the seat on strictly puritan and sacrosanct temperance principles, had not shaken the politico-religious convictions of the men of God whom he had prayed with and subsidised. Having been over-trustful in that case with a man of finance, they betook them to an aristocrat of quite respectable family to hold the fort for them. The Tories, on the other hand, had a man of business to represent them. Mr. Philip Stanhope and Mr. Mitchell—that was the fight. Both parties well organised, and the Tories, hopeful of at last shaking the Radical rule which had so long dominated, not to say bullied, the inhabitants of the town in the interest of that section of the capitalists and profitmongers which held the true political faith, were "better together," to use a boating phrase, than they had ever been before.

The leader of the Radicals was one Greenwood, who, starting as a poor lad with few advantages, had brought himself to the front by dint of thrift, individual force of character, and sheer personal power. He was now an Alderman and virtual master of the Municipal Council. There was no doubt about his ability, and but for local jealousies he would undoubtedly have been the Radical candidate. A man of fine physique, with a powerful head and face, with long beard and an imposing presence generally, his method of speech, though not eloquent, very businesslike and impressive, he was something

of a contrast to the refined and cultured but rather weak type represented by Philip Stanhope, the aristocratic Radical, whose brother Edward, the Tory Cabinet Minister, I had known intimately. It is convenient for a highly respectable but not too wealthy family to have a brother in each party. Well, the contrast between the powerful Greenwood and the slightly effeminate Stanhope was so marked that I got some fun out of it. And the Napoleon of Burnley and little Philip his puppet figured forth as a pleasing couple on the political stage of the borough for many months before the election. Not very long before that date Dan Irving, for some years now an influential person on the Municipal Council, had come into the borough and had become Secretary of the Social-Democratic Federation.

We had tried several "propaganda candidatures" prior to the General Election of 1895, and we had been mainly instrumental in gaining John Burns the seat for Battersea, a success which, as I have pointed out before, he used solely for his personal and pecuniary advantage and directly against the interests of his class. But in other contests we had not been fortunate, and I cannot say that I had much if any hope of gaining the seat in Burnley at the first attempt, as "landslides" such as occur not infrequently in the United States are almost unknown among us slow-going, not to say slow-thinking, English. Moreover, I had a warning on the very first day my candidature opened which I now see was entirely justified, but which I could not believe at the time was as sound as after events have proved it to be. I was going from one part of the town to another in a tram when a man I knew by sight as a frequent attender at our meetings came and sat close beside me.

"I am entirely with you, Mr. Hyndman, in this

fight, and I am myself a thorough Social-Democrat, though I cannot take an active open part in the movement owing to the necessities of my business. You can ask any of our people about me. I want to warn you not to be disappointed if you never win here. I have been for years on the inner Radical Committee in this town, though, of course, I have left it now, and I know all their political dodges of every kind. The Radicals will fight to the death to keep their hold on Burnley and particularly to keep out a Socialist. They have very good reasons for doing so. They would infinitely rather have a Tory in as member for Burnley than have you, though you would vote on their side on all democratic political questions. Even when you think you are winning, and when you certainly would win if all the voting were honest, you will be beaten at the last moment. The Irish vote, on which I know you have a right to reckon, will never go for you, do what you may. The Irish leaders are not only dead against Socialism, but they are absolutely bound to the Liberals and will never break away. But there is more than that, and this I should not dare to say unless we were alone in this car as we are now. There is no town in England more corrupt than Burnley. There are always enough voters to be had at a price to enable the Liberals or, if they ever get sufficiently near to make it worth while, the Tories to turn the election at the last moment. And this will be done against you to a certainty. Of that you may be quite sure. My old colleagues are past masters at that sort of thing, and we used to enjoy concerting plans which should render detection practically impossible. You will make a good fight and Socialism will gain ground, I have no doubt; but unless you can prevent bribery on a large scale the night before the election, or can secure the solid Irish vote, so as

to outweigh the purchased vote, you will never be member for Burnley."

I told my friends and supporters privately what I had heard and who had told me. They admitted there was a great deal of truth in what my ex-Radical friend said, but they believed, as I believed, that, with time, we should overcome all difficulties, and this was only a trial trip, as it were. My agent on this occasion was a dear old Scotchman named Maben, thoroughly up to his business and capable of making the best of an unprepared and unorganised constituency. After two days of going about he told me privately I should poll 1250 votes, which he considered would not be bad considering how well the other parties were organised. At the same time the Liberals and Tories were agreed that I should not poll more than 500 at the very outside.

Where were the votes to come from? they asked. They could count the constituency between them to a man. None the less, and in spite of all gloomy prognostications, we worked as if we were sure to win. Maben kept things well together; the Burnley men and Irving did their utmost; my wife canvassed so successfully that the generally received opinion in the town was she could squeeze a vote out of stone; I spoke indoors, out-of-doors, and wherever two or three were gathered together. Our meetings were so crowded, so enthusiastic, and so successful in every way, that there was eventually a little scare even in the ranks of our enemies. I overheard one man say to another a couple of days before the polling-day: "If meetings go for anything, there may be a great surprise here."

But meetings did not go for anything and I polled 1500 votes, which was considered, when people thought the matter over, as a very remarkable thing. In my own opinion, on a fair poll without any queer dealings, the Tory would have won.

There were some amusing incidents as usual in an election. I am in the habit of reading the most rubbishy sort of tales and romances when I have any heavy strain put upon me; for the excellent reason that if I read anything serious it gives my brain no rest, and if I sit still I begin to think, which is the hardest work of all. This practice nearly shocked our excellent and enthusiastic Maben out of his Scotch sobriety of demeanour. I was reading such a volume as I have described quite comfortably in the corner of the Committee Room at a most exciting period of the election, when we had just got out some of the bitterest and strongest placards we had put upon the walls, and I was waiting for my next turn of duty. Maben espied me thus engaged. He beckoned to Irving, and pointing to me said, "There, just look at him reading a shilling shocker at the most critical moment of the election." He could not make it out at all. Irving only laughed. He knew me.

When we had been beaten and Philip Stanhope had won, we began to look seriously into the voting, and we discovered that 93 per cent of the total electorate had gone to the poll on a three-years-old register in the very middle of the annual holiday. Money had certainly not been lacking on the Liberal side, and the Countess Tolstoy's fortune, the Russian lady whom Mr. Philip Stanhope had married, was used to good purpose. I therefore declared that the election had been won by Russian roubles and Radical resurrectionists. I am confident to this day—though I, of course, could not have won anyhow—that the graveyards of Burnley were brought to the poll with assiduity and success on a scale never before heard of. The day after, I met an old Radical caucus man named Heap, whom I had christened Uriah of that ilk, a little unfairly I now admit. I was walking with my wife, and

Heap came up to talk to us. He spoke freely of the election. So did I. I remarked that of all the dead men's pollings I ever heard of, yesterday's was the most Burke-and-Hareish. The old fellow pretended not to understand. Resurrections, he averred on pressing, were not in his line. A little later, however, he told us a story about how he had contrived to poll no fewer than forty-seven dead 'uns himself at one election. "You old rascal," cried my wife, "I believe you did it yesterday." "No, not yesterday, not yesterday," and off he went laughing. That was my introduction to contested elections in Burnley.

My next fight was in 1906, and then I confess I thought I should win, and so did the majority of the people in Burnley. Much had passed since 1895. For one thing, the Boer War, in which I had taken the right side at great personal and pecuniary risk, but had left Stanhope, who was also an anti-war man, to meet Mitchell single-handed. He was beaten by the reactionary votes of his own supporters. It was now generally recognised, however, that the war had been a disgrace to the nation, and was little short of a disaster, although we nominally gained the victory. There were plenty of Liberals, also, who thought I ought to be in the House of Commons in spite of my opinions, and a few perhaps on account of them. At one moment it even seemed not improbable that I should be left alone to contest the seat against Mr. Gerald Arbuthnot, who now came forward to contest the constituency in place of Mr. Mitchell. But the local people would not stand that. When respectable members of the party refused one after the other to come down to Burnley to try to keep me out, they dug up a discredited Liberal-Labour man of the name of Maddison, who had earned the distrust of the railway men by what they considered the very

suspicious conduct of their journal during a serious strike, and he was chosen to bear the Radical flag.

I shall never forget that election and the magnificent way in which I was backed up by men and women of all classes, not only by coming down and speaking, but with money. The following list gives some idea of what was done :—Lady Warwick, Mrs. Montefiore, Michael Davitt, Bernard Shaw, Quelch, Burrows, Hunter Watts, Kennedy, Blatchford, Cunninghame Graham, Grayson, the Revds. Widdrington, Proudfoot, Hugh Wallace, Conrad Noel, and many more.

It was a hard and a bitter struggle. The Tories behaved well even when they fought their hardest. The Liberals behaved like the meanest of creatures, as, in my experience, they invariably do. Maddison himself was always right to the front when there was any specially dirty work to be done. They stuck at nothing. According to them and their fly-sheets and placards, I was a South African mineowner, an employer of imported Chinese labour, a surreptitious backer of Imperialism, a fraudulent bankrupt. Things got to such a pass when it began to look as if I should come out at the top of the poll, that we placarded the constituency with a huge poster, "Liberal Lies and Liberal Liars," in which we gave them a certificate of character, and produced evidence of their persistent and deliberate mendacity. Dan Irving, who had experienced some of their methods locally, had charge of the election, and there was certainly no lack of vigour on our side. I stood, of course, as a definite revolutionary Social-Democrat, and I am bound to say we gave our enemies more than as good as they brought. Up to the very eve of the poll, I believe, I had won. A tremendous meeting was held two days before which had been addressed by Davitt and myself, the great Irish agitator

and organiser appealing most vigorously to his countrymen in Burnley to rally to my support as a man who had stood by Ireland when it was dangerous to do so, had been a member of the Land League in the old days, and advocated Home Rule as I had in 1880. There was great enthusiasm, and party feeling ran very high. But what my ex-Radical friend of the tramcar spoke of took place. At the last moment the Liberals played their old game, and though I polled just 5000 votes, I failed to carry the seat, and Maddison was member for Burnley.

I fought twice afterwards in 1910. At the first election, if I had been willing to accept Mr. Lloyd George's preposterous Budget, I should, no doubt have got in, and many even of the Social-Democrats thought I ought to do so. But I regarded the Budget as about the biggest fraud, and its author as the most unscrupulous and treacherous political adventurer, that had been seen in our time.[1] I therefore positively declined, for the sake of possible victory, which would have committed me virtually to fraudulent practices, to declare that I was on the side of the Liberals. So I was beaten again, but the fact that Maddison and the Liberals were beaten too gave me some satisfaction. At the second election of the same year, when Mr. Asquith came down at the last moment to help the Liberal candidate, I was beaten once more, and about 1000 votes were knocked off my two previous polls. This, although the whole town

[1] My objection to Mr. Lloyd George's absurdly named "People's Budget" arose not at all from his special taxation of land, though that impost was fiscally unsound and practically worthless. I denounced it to the utmost of my power because, while pretending to tax only the capitalists and the landlords, it mulcted the mass of the people to an extent far surpassing anything ever attempted before. The landlords who raised the greatest hubbub have got off almost scot-free: the working classes who hurrahed for Lloyd George as their saviour have the privilege of paying through the nose for their salvation of short-commons.

talked and looked as if it wished me to be member. Well, I thought that was about enough of it, and I retired from any further political candidature in Burnley.

I had been visiting and speaking and agitating in the town for seven-and-twenty years, and this was the end of it. I do not pretend to say I was not sad and disappointed, and the farewell to my never-discouraged supporters, hundreds of whom were at the Manchester Road Station and travelled with me to the next stopping-place in order to give my wife and myself a parting evidence of their goodwill and affection, touched me deeply. I left behind me so much of misery that I hoped to help to remedy, so much of squalor that I was ambitious to relieve—not only in Burnley, but all over Great Britain. It was useless to repine or to seek for the causes of my defeat. Whatever may be my personal defects, or however great the dexterity of my opponents, the plain truth stood out boldly before me as I travelled down to speak at Bradford on my way home. In spite of all our efforts and the steady work of enthusiastic comrades, the people were not educated enough to understand the crucial importance of Socialism to themselves and their children in their daily life.

The same men who had been locked out by coal-owners and cotton-kings voted steadily for the candidates of their masters (whom they would not trust for five minutes not to cheat them on the weighing-bridge or in the sheds), and handed over the control of the national interests to the dominant class. But the end is not yet. The political upheaval will follow hard upon the industrial stir. Meanwhile, strange to say, I do not feel myself to be the failure which Mr. Philip Snowden, the Liberal-Labour member for Blackburn, and others declare that I am. I venture to predict, indeed, that the day is not far

distant when it will be considered rather odd that Messrs. Stanhope, Mitchell, Maddison, Arbuthnot, and Morrell—not one of whom has ever said, or done, or written anything which anybody can remember, or would remember if he could—should all have been preferred to me as the Parliamentary representatives of a purely industrial constituency such as Burnley.

CHAPTER IV

LADY WARWICK AND AMSTERDAM

The contrasts in the life of a Socialist who is unable to withdraw wholly from active work in the world of capitalism are, I think, more clear-cut and noticeable than can be the case with anybody else. At any rate, I have had such contrasts impressed upon me at times in very dramatic fashion.

My first visit to Amsterdam, for instance, was in the early 'seventies, when I still accepted the ordinary views of industry and finance. I went to Amsterdam with the well-known American financier, the late Mr. Frank Parish—who was the first man I knew to keep a set of rooms permanently in London and Paris, with all he required for his personal comfort in both capitals; so that he habitually crossed from the one city to the other without any luggage at all. I envied him this commodious arrangement. Parish was going to Amsterdam to sell the bonds of the afterwards well-known Denver and Rio Grande Railroad, then controlled by Messrs. Palmer, Dillon & Bell—the latter an old Trinity Hall man. I was crossing on business of my own, in which Parish likewise was interested. The Denver and Rio Grande issue was, as I well remember, for First Mortgage Thirty-Year Gold bonds, bearing interest at the rate of 7 per cent per annum in gold, the principal being repayable at par. Parish sold the

whole of them to the banking firm of Wertheim & Gompertz at the price of 70, with a bonus to the purchasers of 33⅓ per cent in the stock of the railway company. This turned out an uncommonly good business for both sides. The Americans obtained enough money to build their road, out of which they all made fortunes. Messrs. Wertheim & Gompertz, with their clients, received 10 per cent upon their actual cash investment for thirty years, were then paid off at par, which represented a gain of 42 per cent on the purchase price, and held besides their 33 per cent of profitable shares. A very appetising venture. But the Dutch bankers of those days knew very well what they were about in the matter of United States issues, and took up loans in all the Northern and Western States at a time when the less far-sighted finance houses of London, Paris, and Berlin were holding aloof.

My friend Parish and myself stayed at the Amstel Hotel, then just built and rather remote from the town. The Amsterdam we then saw was quite the Amsterdam of the old time and, I judged, of the old smell. Many of the canals now filled in were then open for traffic, and although the city was declared by its inhabitants to be exceptionally healthy, you never would have guessed this if you had only followed your nose. What struck me most about the Amsterdam of that day was its air of well-preserved and solid antiquity and the apparent well-being of the mass of the people. There were no poor to be seen who could be compared for a moment with the sad hopelessness and squalor of the masses of paupers in our own great towns. The Amsterdam of my first visit was indeed a place to remember, and I shall always cherish the impression produced upon me by the splendid Dutch pictures, there and at The Hague, which seem so much more at home in their native

surroundings than they can possibly appear in the most sumptuous foreign galleries on either side of the Atlantic.

Then too I saw a vigorous manifestation of that ancient Dutch patriotism which has by no means yet died down. Parish and I visited the Exhibition together on one occasion when the then King and Queen were present. The comparatively recent annexation of Alsace and Lorraine to Germany, following upon the ruthless seizure of Schleswig-Holstein from Denmark in the previous decade, had given the Dutch cause to fear that an attempt might be made by arrogant Prussian militarism to extend the frontier of the new German Empire so as to embrace Holland and convert Amsterdam and Rotterdam into German ports. Thus it came about that this particular function was made the occasion for a display of patriotic enthusiasm the like of which I have never witnessed in any country. It was the more impressive by reason of the calm and stern, not to say stolid and phlegmatic, character of the thousands of Dutch people who took part in it. The scene was as if the old Burghers who had fought and beaten the picked troops of Spain at the height of her power had returned to Amsterdam once more, in order to encourage their descendants to yet another resistance to the death if the need should arise. The spirit of the old Covenanters of our own island breathed all round us, with the same feeling of religious exaltation at the prospect of going forward to encounter, no matter what odds, which animated Cromwell's Ironsides and the unconquerable starvelings of Londonderry. The Dutchmen made the great Exhibition building resound with their cheers and patriotic cries. It may be that this full-bodied love of political freedom and deep veneration for their great past may have decreased

somewhat among the Dutch of our day, and that the relentless if peaceful pressure brought to bear from the east, in season and out of season, has begun to tell. But I am not sure the Prussians would do well to rely too much upon that. International Socialist as I am, I have ever upheld the right of historic nationalities to work out their own destinies, and there is no nation in the world which has more fully earned its title to independence than the Dutch.

The next time I was in Amsterdam was in connection with a big diamond venture brought to England from South Africa by a man named George Armstrong, who had had much experience in this line. There was good reason for Amsterdam to interest itself in such a mine, if rich enough; inasmuch that the great diamond "Ring" had diverted the trade to a large extent to London, and much suffering had been caused locally by the transfer. It was a funny business altogether. The Englishmen with whom I was associated were quite ignorant of Continental habits and methods, and seemed to have no idea that there could be any other reasonable way of carrying on a negotiation than their own. That the delays were provoking, and Dutch caution at times irritating, is quite true, but for that they should have been prepared.

As day after day passed, however, without coming to any conclusion, they lost patience altogether and denounced the Dutch and all their works with much vigour. One by one they went back to London. Only my Dutch friend, who had originally come over to introduce us, and myself were left. He, too, at last became quite hopeless of success, good though the affair itself at that stage was admitted to be. Though, therefore, I protested against our departure with the matter unsettled, I felt I could scarcely remain by myself, and, over-

night, albeit I refused to leave on the morrow, I was by no means sanguine of success. Our main negotiation had been conducted with an old Jew diamond dealer and cutter named Daniels, who had behind him in the deal five or six of the richest banking and financial firms in the city. But, as I say, we had made no progress, and overnight it seemed as if I should be forced to accompany my Dutch introducer back to London.

In the morning I was of a different mind, and I told my friend Mr. Van der Sluÿs that I meant to have another turn at old Daniels myself. He still declared it was useless, and that I should only put myself in a false position. I replied that I did not care a straw about the false position: my full intention was to obtain the money needed for working capital before I left the good people of Amsterdam. So we went, my friend very reluctantly, to call upon Mr. Daniels. How it all came about I have never been quite able to understand to this day; though I did all the talking myself, and drew the agreements too. But certain it is that, to the stupefaction of Van der Sluÿs, and really to my own amazement, I captured the recalcitrant Daniels, and after him the entire array of solid Dutch financiers along the whole line of their weightiest men, from the Hopes, Wertheim & Gompertz, and Labouchere & Owens, even unto Kremer, Van Egen, and others of like standing.

A Dutch Company was formed, a great success was apparently achieved, and the shares went to a big premium. With my usual loyalty, or fatuity, in such matters, I held stoutly on and would not sell. Later, from various causes, the Dutchmen themselves being in full control, the whole thing fell into the water. A woful case of wasted energy and misplaced confidence in the matter of gem-mining of this sort. Worse still, two of the

originators of the scheme, Daniels himself and one of the Englishmen, committed suicide, and a third, I was informed, had a try at it. Altogether a very sad reminiscence indeed, though happily the suicides did not take place by reason of this particular venture. My dealings with Amsterdam, therefore, had been exclusively financial, and I regarded the Dutch metropolis from the point of view of the mere man of business, intent only on his own chances of money-getting, tempered by enjoyment of the old historic city and its splendid works of art.

How different my visit of 1903. I had but just recovered from a dangerous illness, and went with my wife, from Brasted, where we were then living, with Mrs. Wilhelm Liebknecht and the famous old Parsee champion of justice to India, Dadabhai Naoroji, to stay at the same Amstel Hotel where, as said, I had put up with Frank Parish some thirty years before. I was present to attend as delegate from the Social-Democratic Federation to the International Socialist Congress held in Amsterdam in that year, and as member of the International Socialist Bureau. It is certain that I was far more full of zeal for the cause of Socialism than I had ever been for the success of any of my financial projects. I regarded everything likewise, as all who know what a change of view the comprehension and the adoption of Socialism brings about in a man will understand, from quite a different standpoint from that which I occupied on the occasion of my first stay.

No longer could I consider the great city, for example, as one complete whole, with the various classes and occupations neatly dove-tailed into one another. For the diamond-workers were at this time locked out, and their condition altogether was far worse than a casual visitor, looking only at the

fine building which constituted the headquarters of their trade union, might imagine it to be. Amsterdam was now quite a modern city compared to what it had been: canals filled in, trees planted along their lines, an excellent service of electric cars in every direction, flats of all sorts and sizes built up—there was nothing to find fault with in these respects, and handsome public edifices added to the general appearance of continuous improvement.

But with the brighter and more expansive life at one end of the scale had come already, and quite obviously, a harder struggle for existence at the other. Rents, prices of necessaries of life, the cost of small luxuries had risen, whereas the rates of wages had to some extent fallen. Amsterdam had become a still dearer capital to live in, and the workers, of course, felt the pinch the most.

It was remarkable, however, that though the dominant classes in the Dutch metropolis were very far from being favourable to Socialism, and indeed had quite recently been persecuting the local Socialists, they and the whole of the inhabitants seemed to consider it an honour that we had chosen their capital as the seat of our Triennial International Socialist Congress. Certainly, we were all of us treated with the greatest possible courtesy by the officials and others brought into contact with us; though, beyond doubt, they were not equally considerate to their own townsfolk who indulged in the luxury of sharing our opinions. The fear of the old "International" had passed away, in the course of the thirty-two years since Marx had practically broken it up at The Hague, and we of the new International were regarded as a collection of somewhat fanatical but quite respectable enthusiasts. International generalities in favour of a world-wide Social Revolu-

tion were, to the practical Dutch bourgeoisie, nothing but vague theorising: when it came to direct national demands by their own working class for better conditions of existence all round, that was quite another matter, to be dealt with in a totally different way, as our comrades had already found to their cost.

But of Socialist Congresses in general, and of this of Amsterdam in particular, I speak elsewhere. The most interesting feature of it to me personally was the incident I now relate. I was sitting as one of the delegates, in the body of the hall used for our principal gathering, when a little piece of paper was thrust into my hand by one of the Socialist attendants, on which was written "Lady Warwick," and something to the effect, confirmed by the comrade who brought it, that she was waiting to see me outside. I confess for the moment I was taken a little aback. I, of course, knew the Countess by reputation, and had admired portraits of her, but I had never met her nor even seen her in person. It is not too much to say that I was a good deal prejudiced against her in consequence of the common talk. Though, also, I had heard Lady Warwick had leanings towards Socialism, I could not believe—though why I scarcely know—that she had any genuine sympathy with our movement.

I say "why I scarcely know" deliberately, because I recognise that there is every reason for an able, highly cultivated man or woman to embrace Socialism as the only possible solution of present-day ills and antagonisms, and there was nothing to prevent Lady Warwick, or for that matter any intelligent aristocrat, from accepting the Socialist doctrines, or indeed to preclude them from working for their realisation in fact. Of course I went out into the corridor in reply to the note, and met the

lady herself. Those who know Lady Warwick know also the impression she produces upon any one who encounters her for the first time. Hers is a splendid face and figure, and the effect produced by her appearance was almost startling amid the rather sombre surroundings of a Socialist Congress. For Lady Warwick, apart from her natural advantages, was extremely well-dressed, looked full of animation and vigour, and appeared as if she had not a care in life. Altogether quite an unusual personage to attend such a gathering as an ordinary visitor.

After a few commonplaces, I went with her to a seat in the gallery. When the Congress broke up for luncheon she made the acquaintance of the leading men in the various international parties and attended the great open-air demonstration which was held in the evening, walking round to the different platforms and taking notes of the speeches delivered by Bebel, Van Kol, Vandervelde, Roubanovitch, Jaurès, Vaillant and others. I would have given something myself to have avoided that meeting, for I was not fit to walk the distance and I did not feel at all equal to speaking in the open air. However, Socialism has its small martyrdoms, and nobody is ever supposed to be ill in the ranks. It was a veritable Feast of Pentecost, and a perfect Babel of tongues, seeing that, as nobody could speak the language of the country everybody thought he had a right to talk the lingo he understood best; but Lady Warwick lasted it all out and came back to the same hotel that we were staying at.

During and after dinner we talked Socialism continuously. One of the critics of my previous volume, writing about my interview with Lord Beaconsfield, referred to the remark of that statesman to me: "I am listening to you, Mr. Hyndman,"

and said: "This is usually the fate of those who meet Mr. Hyndman." I am afraid it was Lady Warwick's. When I discovered that she was prepared to give ear I opened the floodgates of talk, and if she was not swept away that was scarcely my fault. All that Socialism has been, was, and in my opinion should be, all the problems it would solve, all the freedoms it would grant, all the delights it would secure, tumbled forth in reckless disregard of the feelings of Lady Warwick or any one else present. My wife gazed at me with ferocious intentness. I believe at one moment the sharp point of her shoe made a deep impression on the calf of my leg. She even tried interruption. All to no purpose. History came hard on economics, science swallowed up sentiment, prognostication overwhelmed theory, synthesis devoured analysis. Lord, how I did go on!

For my part, I consider it the best possible evidence of Lady Warwick's real devotion to Socialism that she not only hearkened unto this diatribe and asked questions up to a very late hour, but that, in spite of all this interminable rush of volubility, she actually joined the Social-Democratic Federation, remained with that organisation for eight years, gave us, as I note below, all the help she could in every possible way, and is now, at the time of writing, an active member of the British Socialist Party. If, having survived my vehement adjurations, that is not complete evidence of sincerity, I should like to know what is. But it must not be supposed that Lady Warwick accepted my dogmatic dissertation without investigation or protest. She had manifestly studied Socialism before, and her criticisms, questions and objections were those of a capable mind. It is quite certain that Lady Warwick did not adopt the Socialist faith—I observe I am falling into a religious form of

diction—without having fully considered it from every point of view. This is an important point in view of statements which are so lightly made about those who take up with Socialism.

Tall, graceful and well-proportioned, with a vast mass of fair hair, clear blue eyes, and a perfect complexion, Lady Warwick might well be considered, as in fact she was, the most beautiful woman of her time. Not knowing what fear is, possessed of a moral courage in politics as remarkable as her intrepidity in the ordinary affairs of life, with a charm of manner alike in the drawing-room and in the market-place which captivates rich and poor, and with a capacity for both speech and writing which entitle her to consideration apart from her beauty or her rank, it is not surprising that Lady Warwick should have made her mark upon her day and generation. In my opinion her career has only begun. In really stirring times her qualities will manifest themselves more conspicuously than it is possible they should in the transition period we are now passing through. The various currents which at present divert even the most enthusiastic from their direct course will then be absorbed in the one great main stream. Aristocrats had, to a large extent, the lead in the great bourgeois uprising in France at the end of the eighteenth century. The educated middle class will, apparently, play the same part in the vast social revolution which is manifestly preparing all over the civilised world. But here, in Great Britain, there will, I venture to predict, be at least one aristocratic figure in the van of the great struggle on the side of the people, and that will be the Countess of Warwick.

There are not wanting those who say plainly :—"If Lady Warwick feels all she says she feels for the sufferings of the poor, and is so fervently

enthusiastic for the realisation of Socialism, why does she not, having had a pretty good enjoyment of all that is delightful in life so far, sell all that she has and give to the poor?" That, of course, applies not only to Lady Warwick but to all who are living upon rent, interest or profit in any shape, and are taking no part in the actual direct work of producing and distributing wealth. But, as I have often pointed out, in this case as in others, surrender by one, under existing economic conditions, only means appropriation by another. The system of wage-earning and profit-taking is not to be broken down by mere personal sacrifice, no matter how noble such forgoing of wealth and position may appear from the old ascetic morality point of view. Brahma, Buddha, Christ, Confucius, Mohammed, all the saints and prophets and martyrs who ever lived and died, have not affected the form of society so much as the invention and application of a single new engine of production. The ultimate goal of self-abnegation is St. Simeon Stylites perched on his pillar, or old Diogenes snarling in his tub.

It will not help forward slave-emancipation for the employer, or capitalist, or landlord, who is eager for the social revolution, to divest himself or herself of all property and to descend into the slave class. Probably the person who did so would become not only useless but, as likely as not, harmful to the movement. All that the most earnest striver after the enfranchisement of the wage-earners can do, who is not a wage-earner himself, is to use wealth, ability, influence, attainments for the purpose of helping on the development which will remove the whole dominant class from its bad pre-eminence. I have seen too many sad evidences of what is the result of such careless indifference to facts ever to advise any Socialist to cut loose from his economic

basis. There is quite enough natural drain in the course of an active Socialist life to render it quite unnecessary to seek for opportunities of useless individual beneficence. But there is no need to argue this farther. Lady Warwick has already done more than was altogether reasonable in her anxiety to help the movement.

The scene changes to a very different locality from that of Amsterdam. It is a fine English mansion in Essex. Part of it old and beautiful and commodious; the other part very commodious but neither beautiful nor old. The Victorian style of architecture in the latter does not go well with the Elizabethan; and happily, from the artistic point of view, creepers hide many of its defects at Easton Lodge. The Lodge, which in France would be called a chateau, faces south and north. To the north there is a very fine view of a rich country stretching far away into the distance, and affording a prospect much more attractive than we Londoners are in the habit of thinking of as existing in Essex. On this side lie the gardens, which are exquisitely laid out, with a charming Italian water garden in their midst, tennis-courts and lawns spreading out above and far away below to a fine sheet of water, with a Japanese house at the bottom amid fine trees. Some lovely cedars cut the sky into parallel slices nearer the house.

The flower-beds, laid out with the glowing colours of magnificent begonias, as I first saw the place, contrast finely with the refreshing green of the grass and the trees, while small groups of people here and there gave life to the scene. Once well clear of the house and its terrace you could descry to the right, nestled in among the foliage, a glorious Indian tent, covered inside with Oriental decorations and inscriptions, bringing the mystic thoughts and poetical conceptions of bright old Hindustan

into the cool practical atmosphere of matter-of-fact old England. Maybe some great Rajah or proud Nawab used to sit on his musnud beneath that splendid canopy, and receive the adoration, or decree the torture and execution of his adherents. It is now dedicated to the twin devotions of talk and tea. But many a time, as I have sat there in the glow of the evening sun, I have seen the turbaned attendants gathered round a group of stalwart warriors, resplendent in their armour and eager to accompany their lord to the fray, while the queer Oriental music hummed in my ears. That tent, so placed among the trees and shrubs, speaks of Beejapore or Agra, of Seville or Cordova, rather than of England and Essex.

To the south of the house, in front of the entrance and beyond a spacious round lawn and ditch, lies one of the finest and best-kept cricket-grounds in the county; while to the left is a grand array of stabling, with a lofty water-tower over an Artesian well, as well as sufficient evidence that, though horses were numerous, the day of the motor-car has also fully come, by the presence of landaulettes and tonneaux of well-known makes. Beyond all this thickly wooded greenery surrounded the open spaces of the park, which made the pretty cricket pavilion and the white tents just erected more conspicuous.

This Easton Lodge was the property of the lady whom we had met in Amsterdam. Her forbears had made their home here for some hundreds of years. There is no doubt about the lineage and descent of the Maynards, I believe, and their quarterings are all right. Race goes for something, and, personally, I much prefer the long-drawn inheritance of landowning expropriation and its representatives to the architects of their own fortunes and self-made men at large, whose genealogy is as short

as their purses are long. I should like to inhabit a planet free from both capitalists and landlords. Expropriated landowners, however, should always be sure, if I had my way, of a supper and shake-down in Venus or Mars. We speak as we find.

But as things go to-day it was not at all the right thing that Lady Warwick should turn Socialist, or that the Earl of Warwick, one of the most courteous, accomplished and charming gentlemen in England, should have a possible co-partnery in the nationalisation of their own land, represented by his wife and himself alike at Warwick Castle and Easton Lodge. What could it all mean? And then the Earl of Wemyss, our unwearying, not to say bitter, opponent of the Liberty and Property Defence League, was actually Lady Warwick's own uncle. How was this magnificent old patriarch to accommodate himself to such a turning against things as they ought to be, on the part of his niece?

To tell the truth, he behaved far better in the matter than much less eminent people. But it was natural that other Tory friends of equally high degree with herself, and politicians of light (dim) and leading (from behind), should protest vigorously against Lady Warwick turning Social-Democrat. To have some sympathy for Labourism was all very well, if a trifle eccentric. There was no real danger in Labourism, nor, at that time, even in Trade Unionism. But downright revolutionary Socialism!—that was quite another matter. What could a refined and highly educated Countess of ability, accustomed to enjoy the good things of this world in the widest sense and with the most delicate discrimination—what could she be doing in such a galley as that which held furious subversionists of the most unseemly and inelegant description, and, in particular, the irreconcilable

and virulent writer of these lines? What indeed? Nobody could make it out.

Mr. Frederic Harrison, whose opposition to Socialism has been as determined as his advocacy of Positivism has been unwearying, took the change very seriously, and said Socialism must indeed be making way in this island when it had captured "the chatelaine of one of our great historic families." Just so. There was the rub. That Lady Warwick should adopt the real Religion of Humanity—for, saving Mr. Frederic Harrison's presence, that is what Socialism is in all truth and soberness to-day—would not have been of so much account had she been the daughter of an ennobled brewer, or banker, or lawyer, or contractor, or colliery-grabber, or money-lender, or capitalist newspaper-owner. Peers and peeresses of that exalted pedigree are tolerably thick upon the ground. But that the heiress of all the Maynards should speak as an out-and-out Socialist to crowded audiences was quite another affair. It was, indeed, a very courageous thing to do. For the prejudice against us was still very strong. We were not only enthusiastic but dangerous fanatics. Not dangerous, perhaps, so much to-day, but certainly to-morrow.

It was quite amusing to hear the views expressed even about myself by some whom in earlier days and amid more conservative surroundings I had known very well. There was one lady who expressed herself very strongly to my address. We heard of it from a famous Court dressmaker who belonged to our party, but whom nobody in his senses would have imagined for a moment to be as subversionary a Social-Democrat as any among us. She was trying on a specially handsome garment for an important customer, when the latter said, "Do you have any trouble with your people now?"—"Oh no, my lady, I pay them well and look after them, and

I believe they are quite contented."—"I thought, perhaps, some of these new opinions might have got in among them and stirred them up against you. You know what I mean, Socialism, and so on."—"No; I have so much to do I really haven't time to read or to think about such things."—"You never heard anything about this Mr. Hyndman and his set?"—"Never, my lady."—"We used to meet him and knew him well, but we hear he has now become quite a low fellow, associating with dreadful people." All which was duly told, the narrator shaking with laughter, and describing the scene and her own gravity with all the natural theatrical touch of a Frenchwoman, to my wife and myself.

To join the Social-Democratic Party, national and international, at such a time was, therefore, I repeat, a very courageous and noble thing of Lady Warwick to do. It meant a very great deal more to her than the mere commonplace acceptance of a set of political and social doctrines which she did not feel herself called upon to champion actively. There are, I daresay, not a few men and women of her order who secretly sympathise with us and go no farther. Ties of family or fear of loss of position or dislike of the working people—who are not possessed of all the virtues and all the charms of life, I freely admit—restrain them. These considerations did not restrain the Countess of Warwick. But she is the only woman of her class to do it in Western Europe, and no man of her rank has yet had either the ability or the pluck to emulate her. They prefer to wait and see. In this case, as of late in some others on a lower social plane, the woman has displayed more capacity and has evinced more determination than the man.

The truth is, that Lady Warwick's enjoyment of life and unwearying appreciation of all that is

most exciting and delightful and exhilarating in the world render her the more intolerant of a social system in which—though the power to produce wealth is so great that it becomes under existing conditions a direct cause of crisis and poverty—there is no hope that the mass of the actual producers will ever obtain any considerable share of it, with the accompanying joy in life which attends the removal of all anxiety and the full development of and outlet for every physical and mental faculty—I say that Lady Warwick's experience of what is in her case and what might be in that of others, makes her not only intolerant but bitterly hostile towards a series of social inequalities and antagonisms which, even supposing them to have been inevitable in the past, could easily be put an end to by conscious and capable social effort now and in the future. That, I know, is her view of things, for I have not infrequently heard her express it. And from dislike and contempt to active revolt is no long step. The material basis of poverty and deterioration being understood, all the rest follows quite naturally. In fact, I have always found that the most resolute Socialists — those who are least likely to be led astray by mere sentimental flapdoodle and eager desire to make twelve o'clock at eleven—are precisely those who see most clearly and enjoy most fully all that is delightful in human existence. It is the puritan prigs and indecent prudes of the movement who sell out and turn round.

Sympathy with poverty, hatred of oppression, generous democratic feeling for the people, and sincere desire that all around her should have a thoroughly pleasant life had always kept Lady Warwick in close touch with popular aspirations, long before she became a Socialist. Though herself a large employer of agricultural labour, she

was one of the most active supporters of Joseph Arch—Joseph Surface, as I christened him after a certain meeting in Southwark — at the very commencement of his earlier honest campaign; though the great Lady of the district she sent her children to the common school in their early years to associate with the children of the workers; though the owner of thousands of acres of land she declared herself in favour of land nationalisation, and of the handing over of Warwick Castle, meanwhile, as an architectural and archæological treasure-house for the nation. All this shows that Lady Warwick inherited with her ancestral domains a strain of genuine sympathy with the people of England, which grew with her growth and gained strength from her experience.

Her career has been steadily progressive all through, and her acceptance of revolutionary Socialism, wholly divorced from miserable asceticism and hypocritical puritanism, was only a natural development following almost inevitably upon her previous line of thought and action. Precisely this it was which angered the reactionists. That a lady of culture and refinement should see in revolutionary Socialism the means of bringing within reach the realisable ideal of her own Social aspirations, and should take an active part in educating the mass of her countrymen and countrywomen as to what such material and yet ideal Socialism signified for her as well as for them was inevitably a shock to those who felt sure that Social-Democracy must involve the sweeping away, not of misery and want, degradation and ignorance, but of all the higher parts of human civilisation.

And here, of course, the congenital malignity of society stepped in to make things still more ugly and disagreeable. Lady Warwick, beautiful, accomplished, impulsive, generous, and extrava-

gant, has been an easy mark for malicious gossips and scandal-mongers. The tale-bearing of Courts has always been not only ill-natured but inventive, as we know, from the days of the Roman Empire and long before then. Calumny does not stick at trifles when an end has to be gained, or an influential person is to be injured. It is safe to say, for instance, that ninety-nine people out of a hundred who know about Lady Warwick merely from common talk and ordinary newspaper chit-chat believe that Lady Warwick, then Lady Brook, was present at Tranby Croft when that most unpleasant and still not wholly explained incident of cheating at cards took place at the Wilsons', round the table where the late King was playing as Prince of Wales. Yet Lady Warwick was neither at Tranby Croft on that occasion, nor has she ever visited the place in her life. Nevertheless, a whole series of discreditable assumptions have been built up against her, based upon the certainty that she was there at the time. Nor, probably, will this campaign of misrepresentation be allowed to die out, especially in the United States, in spite of Lady Warwick's positive denial in the *Times*.

And this is only one of a long series of misstatements of a similar character. Of course no one, possessed of her vigour, initiative and courage, could fail to have the defects of her qualities. Socialists, no matter what class they may happen to belong to, are not exempted from the common lot of humanity in that respect. And Lady Warwick belongs to a more spacious age than ours. As I have not been able to refrain from saying to her more than once, she ought to have been born into the fifteenth century, the golden age of our history, when the mass of the people in this island were well-off and independent, when the position of Chatelaine of a great family was

recognised without envy, and accepted without servility, and when "largesse, largesse" carried with it no sense of condescension on the part of the giver, and evoked no feeling of humiliation on the part of the receiver. This latter part of her duties as a great lady she would undoubtedly have understood and have carried out to perfection in those happy days of the English peasantry.

Such was the succession of reflections which coursed through my mind several times at Easton Lodge, when I have seen Lady Warwick crossing the lawn to her guests, or, as we sat conversing about many things under the trees, or above the lily-bespangled water with pergolas framing in the picture on either hand. But never did the possibility of it all come home to me more forcibly than when Lady Warwick invited all the active members of the Social-Democratic Federation down to a day's pleasuring at that delightful place. It was a lovely summer day. The gardens and the lawns, the cricket-ground, tennis-courts, park and woods looked their very best, and the whole scene lent itself to enjoyment and jollity. Several hundred people came. Needless to say the whole thing was admirably done in every way. Those present had games of all kinds at their disposal, the full run of the place for the satisfaction of their curiosity and power of admiration. Excellent fare was laid out in a spacious tent, and for that day at any rate every one felt that the cares of competitive life were lifted from off their shoulders and could understand what was meant by Lafargue's "Right to Leisure"—active repose, lulled by the beauty of the surroundings, coming after services rendered to the community. The charm and delight of civilised existence sandwiched in for a few hours between the hard realities of capitalist life. What is even more pleasant to recall is the

fact that, though a large portion of the visitors came from some of the poorest parts of London, and the house, as well as the grounds, was thrown open to all who chose to wander through it, a broken glass door, slammed too forcibly by accident, was the sole record of damage done, and none of the beautiful things which lay scattered around in the house were mislaid or injured. It is certain that if the highest happiness consists in securing happiness for others, Lady Warwick herself was a happy woman that day.

In fact, there is some difficulty for me in regarding Lady Warwick except as a hostess, and I fancy there are not a few in the like position.

The fifteenth century came back again to my mind out of the past at the splendid pageant at Warwick Castle, or, when afterwards looking out from the Castle itself over the ruins of Elizabeth's Bridge, and as the exquisite landscape of wood and water happily commingled faded slowly from sight in the gloaming, I tried to live again into the feudal period, and watch the stir and colour of those grand and cruel old days sweep along in gorgeous array, lit up by flambeaux, into the darkness of the night. If I once began that I could never leave off, not even when the raucous cry of the numberless peacocks broke in upon the grateful cawing of the rooks, who had not then taken their sudden and mysterious departure from their ancestral tree-tops.[1]

There is something so fascinating and seductive in the effort to materialise, as it were, in thought and in writing the unsubstantial visions of history,

[1] In 1911 the rooks at Warwick Castle held innumerable conferences of a most solemn character. At the end they all took their departure. The countryside was filled with consternation. Some terrible disaster would assuredly befall the family. Nobody could find out whither they went. This year (1912) I hear they have returned as suddenly as they left.

and to people once more with the inhabitants of a bygone age the halls and corridors, the reception rooms and boudoirs of a great baronial castle, or a fine old manorial house, that, in such farther reincarnations as, unknown to myself, may be vouchsafed to me, I hereby reserve and claim the larger part of my coming pilgrimages on this planet for one continuous endeavour thus to call up from the centuries the men and women who went before us, through what will then be our England, in their habit and complexion as they lived. It is certain that the sight of Lady Warwick strolling in the gardens of Easton Lodge or Warwick Castle would greatly help in this imaginative re-creation.

But it is too late, much too late, for all this now. So I only recall with pleasure those talks now and again when I have endeavoured—such was my zeal or my rashness—to win over Lord Warwick to our material religion, or when I argued at the time of the Georgian Budget that, if only they would but see it, then was the time for the aristocrats to have gone in boldly on the side of the people, who were being taxed millions against the paltry thousands about which the modern nobles of England raised so pitiful yet so shrill a cry. I looked on with blank amazement as I saw men of knowledge and ability who had spoken boldly of their "patriotism" and their "order" surrender at discretion before even the battle was joined. I have no sympathy with the great landowners of Great Britain (now for the most part mere sleeping partners in the profit-mongering production and sweating slave-drivery of the capitalist class which does the actual dirty work), whose forbears grabbed the Church lands and stole the commons of our country, with a nefarious meanness scarcely to be equalled by the very worst of the cotton and coal lords.

Nevertheless, I do feel with Robert Owen that, bad as the nobles and landowners of the old time, with their descendants and supplanters, were and are, they both were and are better than the leading representatives of the capitalists, whose crushing economic and social tyranny has degraded and embittered millions of our people. I could not understand then, and I fail to comprehend now, why a man like the Earl of Warwick of ancient descent, sportsman and soldier, artist and man of the world, should have given in rather than fight the thing out to a finish, side by side with that robust old lawyer Halsbury, or the still more ferocious firebrand Willoughby de Broke. Though I should have found myself to a certainty in the opposite camp to my kind and courteous host, I should, I confess, have liked to see the House of Lords making a stand against the most corrupt,[1] unscrupulous, and tyrannical House of Commons known to our history. It would at least have fallen with dignity instead of being kicked downstairs with contempt. And possibly this influences me in some degree: it is certain we Socialists, with us Lady Warwick herself, must have gained in this pleasing encounter between the kites and the crows.

"How was it you nobles allowed yourselves to be beaten so badly?" was asked of one of them after the great French Revolution. "*Nous étions des lâches*"—we were cowards, was the reply. Not physical cowards. No one could accuse them of that. They went to the scaffold under terrible conditions, with the coolest courage; and their womenkind, who practised mounting the steps to execution on orange boxes in their prison, so

[1] I am told this is quite wrong. There is no corruption in the House of Commons. Isn't there? How about the National Telephone purchase? What of the Standard Oil privileges? Why was the South African Inquiry closed down? Who bought Marconi shares? etc. etc.

that they might in no wise derogate from their aristocratic deportment and elegance when they completed their final toilette and reception, were even more intrepid and dignified than the men. No, it was not physical but moral courage they lacked. They felt that their whole system was in decay and had outrun its usefulness; though their conception of this fact, perhaps, never took clear shape in their minds. It was, happily for them, under widely different conditions that the aristocracy here felt impelled to give way, and I am quite confident that the capitalists will be still more incompetent and morally pusillanimous when their turn comes, and they are really put to the test.

But it was not the winning side which Lady Warwick took when she threw in her lot with Socialism nine years ago. Very far, indeed, from that. Still less was it the winning side which she supported, at great personal and pecuniary sacrifice, in the General Elections of 1906, 1910, and 1910 again. Nothing could have been more depressing than the results of my own candidatures at Burnley on each occasion. We were so near and yet so far in the first two, and in the last it was nothing short of a complete slump—the votings were even worse. I consider it wonderful that she has stuck to the cause, with practically no success to brighten her path, during these long years. Last summer and this, when Tillett and Thorne and Jones had that very difficult task at the East End of London, when at any moment local as well as national feeling might have turned, and, in fact, was turning against them, Lady Warwick went up frequently from Easton to encourage the strikers in their work, though she had plenty of troubles of her own on hand at that time. Possibly she thought more would come from that movement and the strike

of the miners than really resulted; but that is only to say that, quite unlike the great majority of her class, she was anxious that the workers should make their power felt and should force the economic and social conflict and class war to an issue, before the wage-earners themselves were ready to appreciate the opportunities which lay ready to their hand.

That, as said, the lady has the defects of her qualities is no more than is true of any man or woman possessed of her capacity for initiative, her generous desire to help all down-trodden people, and her impulsive anxiety to rush to the front at any period of stir. But, so far as I am aware, no woman of her rank in Western Europe has gone out of her way to aid the emancipation of the masses from their enslavement of our day as the Countess of Warwick has done. That she has not neglected the development of her children or weakened the ties of her family life by so doing, is obvious to all who have the least knowledge of her domestic surroundings.

CHAPTER V

INTERNATIONAL SOCIALIST CONGRESSES

In the year 1888 a Trade Union International Congress was held in London. It was a very dull affair, almost wholly controlled by the Liberal members of Parliament, who then held the dominant position in English Trade Unionism. The delegates were, indeed, a most respectable, comfortable, self-satisfied lot. Not that they were destitute of class feeling, or that they were unable to conduct a determined Trade Unionist fight against employers in their respective trades. Broadhurst, Burt, Pickard, Fenwick, Burnett, Mawdsley, and others had given abundant evidence that they could stand up for the aristocracy of labour in their limited way as well as any of the representatives of the workers who have come to the front since. But they had no ideal whatever: no conception of the tremendous change which the development of economic and social conditions, combined with the class-conscious intelligence of the producing class, would bring about. Socialism was for all of them an unrealisable, not to say undesirable, Utopia; the teachings of the old Chartist leaders had completely faded from their minds, and they stoutly resisted as contemptible trickery any attempt to use the machinery of the Trade Unions and the votes of the Trade Unionists in order to obtain political influence. These leaders were Liberals, Noncon-

formists, Compromisers, respecters of the powers that be, almost to a man. And the delegates were like unto them. Anything duller than the proceedings it is impossible to imagine. I was reminded, as I looked down at them, of the French Assembly at Bordeaux, after the great Franco-German war, when certain of the more frivolous young women in the gallery used to gamble with one another at a game which might be Englished as "Bald-Headed Loo," stakes being risked and winning determined by the number of flies that might settle at any one time on an eminent legislator's head.

The only interesting stir was created by one of our party, who has since sold out to the Liberals, but then was preparing the way for his profitable political deal, by furious personal attacks on Mr. Henry Broadhurst; and by our old friend Adam Weiler, who actually had the temerity to propose an Eight Hour Law enacted by Parliament in that strange Rip Van Winkle gathering. Needless to say, he met with no success. Of Adam Weiler the story is told that, when working as a joiner at Shoolbred's, at the time of the establishment of Bismarck's Exceptional Laws against the Socialists in Germany, his fellow-workmen chaffed him mercilessly upon the sort of legislation that was thought good enough for Germans. Weiler said nothing. "They wouldn't bring in laws like that here." Weiler still kept silence. "They would never attempt to put us under Muzzle Laws of that kind in England; they know better." "Vell," retorted Weiler, "I never did hear of no man as vas such a fool as to muzzle a sheep." Bernard Shaw "conveyed" this witticism and spoilt it in his *John Bull's Other Island.* The English workers are not quite so sheep-like to-day. But I have never forgotten that 1888 Congress. Its dreary bleat sounds still in my ears.

The International Socialist and Trade Union Congress of 1896 was a very different affair indeed. Socialism had then begun to exercise slowly, more slowly than we thought at the time, a considerable influence in this country. So great a change had been wrought indeed that the Trade Unions cordially welcomed co-operation with the Social-Democratic Federation and the Independent Labour Party in holding this International Socialist and Trade Union Congress, and they behaved most handsomely throughout. Taken as a whole, this Congress of sixteen years ago will well bear comparison with any that have been held since. The Queen's Hall, with its side Halls and Committee Rooms, formed a magnificent centre, the arrangements for the Congress itself and for the convenience of the delegates were admirably carried out, the social functions in connection with it were pleasantly conducted, and the great meeting in Hyde Park, though spoilt by the weather, was preceded by as imposing and well-ordered a procession as has ever marched to that historic demonstration ground.

It has always seemed to me that the English Trade Unionists acted so well on this occasion, that had the Socialists themselves been thoroughly consolidated they might have been able to make such agreements with these organised workers, without in any way sacrificing their principles or giving up their independence, as would have led eventually to great results. But the love of intrigue, devotion to sharp practice, and eagerness for domination which have always characterised the leaders of the Independent Labour Party, even before Mr. Ramsay Macdonald came forward to strengthen and exacerbate these unpleasing and injurious tendencies, rendered co-operation impossible, and a very promising chance of organising the working-class forces was missed.

Wilhelm Liebknecht, who, prior to this Congress, had had a strong prejudice against the Social-Democratic Federation, saw then clearly how the land lay, detected who were to blame for the lack of Socialist fraternity in Great Britain, and sided with us thenceforth to the day of his death. More important was a conversation I had with James Mawdsley, the acknowledged chief of the cotton-workers, at his request during the Congress. Unlike the majority of the Trade Union leaders, Mawdsley had no love for the capitalist Liberal Party and its chiefs. He regarded them as the worst enemies of the working class. This, notwithstanding the recent miserable truckling and selling out to Liberalism in this country, has always been the attitude of the most capable and honest men in the International Socialist movement. Mawdsley was of opinion that advantage should be taken of this Congress for the Trade Unionists to endeavour to shake off the galling yoke of the treacherous and hypocritical Liberals, and to constitute a thoroughly organised party of the people. I pointed out that Socialists could not possibly co-operate in such an effort so long as English Trade Unions kept out of the political arena and adhered to the old hopeless *laissez-faire* doctrines; that also some definite recognition of Collectivist and Socialist effort must be conceded, even if we retained, as we must retain, our full liberty of propaganda and political action in any combination that might be formed.

The whole thing fell through, and the Trade Unionists, unfortunately, have not ceased to grovel before the Liberals. I only recall the incident now as showing that even in 1896 one of the ablest, as well as one of the most upright and independent, of the old school of Labour leaders saw that until the workers combined politically in their own in-

terests and co-operated with Socialists in a vigorous attack upon the capitalists nothing important could be done. That was sixteen years ago. In 1912 the Socialist Party in Great Britain is still divided, and the Trade Union members of Parliament are still the most obedient, humble servants of the capitalist Liberals; many of them having quite recently accepted highly-paid posts from their political masters and constituted themselves members of a corrupt and irresponsible bureaucracy.

But the 1896 Congress, nevertheless, was a most inspiring gathering, which might well lead those who took part in it to believe that great things would shortly be achieved. It created a marked impression upon our Continental comrades to find that even Great Britain, with all her stagnation and reaction since 1848, was beginning to move in an international sense. To look round the large hall, crowded with delegates from all parts of the United Kingdom, as well as from all the nations of the Continent, was full of encouragement for them. On the other hand, the Englishmen had the opportunity of seeing the veterans of the continental movement in the flesh, whom for many a long year they had known only by reputation. They felt for the time being that they too formed an integral portion of that vast and ever-growing international party which, though with their "practical common sense" they smiled at its ideals and distrusted its methods, they could not but recognise had organisations as powerful as their own, to be able to send such a number of delegates to the British metropolis, who obviously met not as strangers but as friends and comrades in one great cause.

The whole of the metropolitan press set to work to misrepresent and belittle the Congress from the first. The journal with the largest circulation of

the day actually instructed its chief representative, in a letter which came into my hands, only to report scenes of disturbance and uproar. Most of these journals garbled the speeches, mis-stated the facts, and grossly caricatured the whole of the proceedings. The *Times*, the *Standard*, and the *Westminster Gazette*, however, though they vilified us in their comments, did report honestly what took place. Happily, by a very great effort on the part of all connected with the paper, *Justice* was published daily during the Congress with a correct record of what took place; so that all who take an interest in the details of one of the greatest and most important international gatherings ever held can still learn the truth about the debates. Even Socialists are sometimes apt to overrate the influence of the capitalist press. But all really great movements of the people have necessarily been carried on regardless of, and in opposition to, the opinions of the dominant classes as expressed in their Parliaments, on their platforms, in their pulpits, and through their press. Socialism in this and every other country has made way in spite of the most furious detraction from all these quarters.

As I wrote at the time, the opinions of the capitalist press "have no more real value as to the importance of our Congress than the views of the priests of the temple of Jupiter at Rome had as to the advance of Christianity in the third century." And I repeat this now, not out of any animosity towards an institution which is so obviously the creature of its surroundings as the advertisement-supported press of this country, which has always treated me personally quite as well, or better than, I had any right to expect; but because there is a tendency even in our own ranks to exaggerate the influence of daily papers, forgetting, as many do,

that in Germany, by far the most advanced country, it is the movement that has made the Socialist newspapers, not the newspapers which have made the movement, though now, of course, they act and interact upon one another. That the journalists of a party should exalt the horn of journalism is only a piece of human nature with which it would be foolish to quarrel. But somehow both Christianity and Mahommedanism, not to speak of other Asiatic creeds, made rapid way without newspapers, and their votaries fed upon pamphlets and speeches. The same has been the case with Socialism.

I am bound to admit, however, that the Congress of 1896 did give some cause for our enemies to blaspheme. We were there smitten with a plague—the plague of Anarchists. Of Anarchism I have spoken before. Its theories, if theories they can be called, are so intensely individualist that I have never been able to understand how Anarchists can logically accommodate them even to the most primitive and elementary form of Communism or the simplest Trade Unionism. But logic is not their strong point. It introduces consecutive and intelligible co-ordination into the processes of thought and reason, and they revolt even against the abstract being in any sense regimented, or reduced to a system. If it suited their immediate purpose, they would forthwith revolutionise the rules of arithmetic and turn the motions of the planets upside down. Why men of this texture of mind should wish to force themselves upon a Socialist and Trade Union Congress I am at a loss to this day to understand. But there they were — Malatesta, Merlino, Domela Nieuwenhuis, and a good many more. The infuriated subversionist, Aristide Briand, had of his mercy withheld from us on this occasion the light of his countenance and the mellifluous accents

of his voice. But there were quite enough without him.

The shindy began on the point of verification of credentials. Naturally. Opposed as they were to everything the rest of the delegates stood for, it was very difficult, no matter how elastic we might make the proverbial catholicity of Socialists, to bring these advocates of topsy-turvydom within the fold of the material church. It was argued, especially by the Germans, that those who were opposed to collective and Socialist organisation for the attainment of individual perfection had no right whatever to be present at a Congress summoned to promote that end; that direct actionists who abjured and denounced all political propaganda were out of place among hundreds of delegates who all accepted politics as the easiest and best means of economic emancipation of the workers; and that people who believed in the personal propaganda of deed by bomb and assassination, even in non-despotic countries, could not rightfully claim to take part in a Congress which regarded such proceedings, in Western Europe at any rate, as anti-social crimes.

To my mind these contentions were absolutely irrefragable. They did not leave the Anarchists a leg to stand upon. But there they were, and there they stood, and there they vociferated, when they learned that there was an intention of excluding or ejecting them from the Congress. Perhaps I shall not be doing them an injustice if I say that they came expecting a disturbance and would have been disappointed if the opportunity had not been given them for making an uproar. The truth was, the Congress had been rather loosely summoned. There had been no more thought of the presence of Anarchist Trade Union delegates than of Catholic or other reactionary Trade Union dele-

gates. And the Anarchists, mostly Trade Unionists themselves, claimed that they had as much right to be present as any Trade Unionists on the floor of the Queen's Hall.

Hence an indescribable hubbub. The chairman for the first day was appointed by the English Trade Unionists, who constituted a majority of the British section. He was a fine, upstanding, full-blooded Yorkshireman with a north-country accent of a most pronounced kind. Three languages were allowed at the Congress—English, French, and German. Our chairman, Cowey, only understood one—his own—and that, for the purposes of such a Congress as this, no more than imperfectly. So when this question of the Anarchists came up there was a pretty to-do, which Cowey, though everybody recognised his goodwill and impartiality, was wholly unable to calm down. Business became almost impossible, and I felt quite sorry for Cowey, who, unaccustomed to the most peaceful methods of discussion at continental gatherings, which, to us, always seem so much like vehement controversy and physical misunderstanding, could scarcely be expected to regard the simultaneous outbreak of downright disorder and furious vociferation as the natural concomitants of fraternal greetings. It did look at one moment as if the Assembly might resolve itself into two conflicting factions of the chuckers-out and the chucked. One Anarchist hot-gospeller, Cornelissen by name, who would persist in mounting the platform, was indeed induced to seek a lower level with more precipitation than judgment as to his method of descent. So the Anarchists may be said to have had an excellent innings at Anarchy, small as was the minority which embraced the lot of them.

The main disturbances arose about the admission of Anarchists at all. A resolution had been passed

at the International Congress of Zurich by which Anarchists, who were and are opposed to political action and to representation in any form, were excluded from future International Socialist Congresses. This resolution had been accepted afresh by the English delegation by an overwhelming majority. It was well known that nearly all the national delegations in the hall were against the admission of, or at the least against giving equal opportunity for discussion to Anarchist delegates. They had no right there at all, and could only remain as a matter of courtesy. But they were determined to upset the proceedings if this lay by any means in their power. Moreover, they were vehemently supported in their action, notwithstanding the vote of the British delegation, by Keir Hardie and Tom Mann. Mann was specially furious, not only in the Queen's Hall, but at the separate Anarchist meeting afterwards held in the Holborn Town Hall, at which Keir Hardie was the first speaker. Hardie actually advised his Anarchist friends to stand firm and remain as delegates in spite of all votes. Mann went farther and declared that he did not differ materially from them as to methods, and gave them his heartiest welcome.

It was in opposition to such fustian, given forth in and out of the Congress, that I made the following speech, when the chairman, Paul Singer, quite unexpectedly called upon me :—

In rising to reply to the unexpected request of our Chairman, I wish in the first place to say that I do not support the resolution because it was formulated at Zurich. I was not at Zurich, and I am not pledged to it personally. I support it from an independent point of view. Look at the title of this Congress. It is the Congress of the International Socialist Workers and Trades Unions. No word of invitation to Anarchists or Anarchist-Communists. The Social-Democratic Federation in issuing its invitations did

not insert Anarchists or Anarchist-Communists, because they have repeatedly declared that they do not believe in Congresses or in representation at all. Merlino, who is a personal friend of my own, and for whom I entertain a most kindly feeling, declared at the Paris Congress in 1889 that they had come there with the express intention of upsetting a lot of fools like us. There was order, there was toleration, there was fraternity!

Here arose terrific interruption from the Anarchists, which I claimed should not be counted in my time. Hoarseness having supervened with the majority of the shouters, I was again able to make myself heard.

I now say in reference to Tom Mann's speech that the difficulties he experienced in the early days of the movement I experienced also, and even some years before him. Who were the men, however, who, when the capitalist press was vilifying us as rogues and scoundrels—who were they who joined in this denunciation? The Anarchists.

Again the Anarchist interruptions broke forth and continued.

There is another example of toleration, Mr. Chairman. We are told if we admit our opponents we can rely upon their dignity and self-control. [Keir Hardie and Tom Mann had both earnestly pleaded this on behalf of their Anarchist comrades.] I congratulate Mann on the way his clients are acting in support of his speech, to which they have just listened! The British section just now decided by 223 to 104 against the view taken by the Vice-Chairman, Keir Hardie, and Tom Mann. We therefore stand committed to the Zurich resolution. We have come here to do business and not to dispute about principles. If you do not accept this resolution, you will stultify yourselves in the eyes of the world. We cannot enter into discussions here upon basic questions which have been decided at Congress after Congress. I yield to no man in toleration, whether the discussion take place at the street corner or in the lecture-room. But I denounce Anarchy. I declare against disorder. I stand up here for the order and organisation of International Social-Democracy.

Jaurès and Vandervelde spoke at much greater length in the same sense, and in favour of political action. Domela Nieuwenhuis, then recently perverted to Anarchism, spoke at still greater length in reply. After this, preparations to take the vote by nationalities were made. The Zurich resolution was carried by 18 votes to 2.[1]

Unfortunately, also, at this particular Congress the acute differences between the two sections of the French Socialist Party made themselves manifest after a very robustious fashion. With a disregard to the fitness of things, which was bitterly regretted when the result was witnessed, but which was surely a natural mistake on the part of the organisers of the Congress, the Guesdists and the Possibilists were put close together at adjoining tables, under the grouping of "France." They took advantage of this ill-devised propinquity to call attention to one another's shortcomings with an amount of detailed particularity that left nothing to desire in point of offensiveness. This too scarcely helped to impress the harmony of the proceedings upon outsiders not already imbued with the true faith. In fact, I have always congratulated the comrades from that day to this that the greater part of the delegates came of cooler blood than is to be found to the south of the Channel.

It is not to be wondered at that the English press should have made the very most of these scenes, regardless of the fact that in the sober, phlegmatic House of Commons itself much more serious trouble, tempered by dynamitical explosion and accompanied by revolverist threats, had occurred night after night in the previous

[1] It is only fair to state that a vigorous and influential protest against the speeches and action of Keir Hardie and Tom Mann was issued by members of the I.L.P. The signatures to this document included those of J. F. Green, Ramsay Macdonald, Joseph Burgess, Percy Widdrington, Enid Stacey, John Lister, and many more.

decade. Men in these cases only recall what they wish to remember. But the upshot of it was that the fine but much-bewildered Cowey gave up his Presidency of the recalcitrant assemblage, and the able, if a trifle arbitrary, Singer, of the German Social-Democratic Party, reigned in his stead.

Singer understood the languages, and was well supported, not only by his own national comrades, but by the overwhelming majority of the Congress. But here again, unluckily for all of us, our chairman was too autocratic and dictatorial towards the Anarchists. Cowey let them out of hand by too great urbanity: Singer provoked their fury by too much authority. Bedlam broke loose more than once, and we began to despair of peace and progress within the period of seven days during which Queen's Hall was at our disposal. Hitherto, with the exception of the one little pacificatory speech, given above, which the *Daily News* was kind enough to preface its report of with the kindly note of appreciation: "Then arose Mr. Hyndman, with a tongue like a razor dipped in gall"—with this exception, I had been a silent, if somewhat exasperated, participator in the deliberations. Now my turn came, and I found myself in the chair. I wondered as I took my place whether the bell on the table, almost a replica of Big Ben, would be of any more use to me than it had been to my predecessors. Like Singer, I knew French and German, and was therefore able to deal with the disorderly elements direct. With an amount of prudence, which I can easily imagine might be called by a harsher name by some, I came to terms with the Anarchists, and, by arrangement, Malatesta, whose violent honesty nobody has ever challenged, was given a reasonable time to explain his position and place his views before the Congress. He spoke very well from his point of view, and as the Anarchists

kept in the main to their bargain, we had comparative peace until the disagreements between the more and the less advanced parts of the Socialist army became troublesome.

Aggravating, however, as these misunderstandings were, and terribly as time was wasted on the earlier days, the principal objects of the Congress were achieved. Complete solidarity among Socialists of various nationalities on the main issues was displayed; resolutions of an important character were passed; as the Congress progressed, a fine spirit of fraternity and good feeling was evoked; the great social gathering at the Crystal Palace—enlivened, no doubt for the express benefit of our French comrades, by a pyrotechnic reproduction of the Battle of the Nile!—was a huge success; and the evening meeting in the Queen's Hall—when all the leading orators spoke, and I was in the chair—was crowded and enthusiastic. Even more important would have been the meeting in Hyde Park. The procession, with bands and Socialist and Trade Union banners, was one of the most imposing that has ever been seen in our metropolis.

It was a splendid show. But I for one had looked with apprehension all the time upon huge masses of cloud that were banking up to the westward, and hoped rather than believed we should get through the proceedings without a downpour. My worst anticipations were realised. The rain carefully waited until we had reached the Park and were arranged on and around the platforms, when it burst out upon us with more than tropical fury. Millerand, who has since "gone capitalist," was on the platform where I was chairman. He had a waterproof. I had not. I opened the meeting, briefly, and stood out a portion of Millerand's address.

Then none of us could bear it any longer.

People often talk metaphorically of being "wet to the skin." I have seen the heavens open upon me with a fine rush of rain-water in many climates, but never before or since in my life could I use that phrase in its full significance of complete personal drenching so correctly as on this occasion. This time I could feel the water actually flowing down what I may call my innermost skin and finding its way in haste to my boots. It was a case of *sauve qui peut* from the elements. No Anarchist bombs could have brought about a more universal scuttle.

I felt that cab or omnibus, even if one could be got, was useless, and I made the worst of my way, still pelted continuously with rain, and oozing water at every seam, till I was able to deposit my dripping raiment, which fell with a squish, on the floor, and my person, which was thoroughly chilled, in a hot bath, about a mile from the scene of our abortive demonstration. Nobody who was in Hyde Park without an umbrella or mackintosh on that day will ever forget it. To make up for this untoward experience we organised a trip on a steam launch up the Thames to Henley. These picnics were by no means so common then as they are now; and as genuine picnics they were most enjoyable. Our foreign comrades, none of whom had seen the upper reaches of the Thames before, were delighted; and a certain significance was given to the trip by a body of Socialists who came to meet us at Henley from Oxford, Reading, and other branches of the S.D.F. Our guests on board, Bebel and the others, delivered inspiring addresses, and, the weather being fine, the whole trip was delightful.

This International Socialist and Trade Unionist Congress of 1896, though marred to a certain extent by the troublous incidents I have lightly

touched upon, remains a landmark in the history of Socialism in this country and elsewhere. Taught by experience, it was decided that in future only those Trade Unions which accepted political action and were prepared to advocate the socialisation of the means of production should be admitted to the next and succeeding Socialist Congresses. This decision has permanently kept out the Anarchists; but the non-Socialist Trade Unionists have of late years been admitted on the express ground that by arrangements with the capitalist Liberals their representatives could get into the British House of Commons, while avowed revolutionary Socialists could not. It is a singular position for a Socialist Congress to drift into. But the value of these International Congresses is mainly, as will be seen, the meeting of the most active men from all countries, and the encouragement they give to one another by conference as to the progress of the cause in each.

By 1900 the cause of Socialism in France had advanced so far that the two French sections could join in the invitation to the International Congress of that year. This, I am bound to say, was the utmost limit of their unanimity. That accomplished, they parted in peace and came together in war. The scenes of the London Congress between the French delegates were reproduced in an even more furious fashion in Paris. It is not too much to say that the whole of the proceedings were greatly interrupted, at not remote intervals, by exhibitions of Gallic fraternity which could scarcely be distinguished from a keen disposition for mutual slaughter. To this day all who witnessed these demonstrations of goodwill express their astonishment, when they speak of the Paris Congress, that the delegates from the French parties were able to take part in subsequent proceedings without

bearing evidence on their persons of brotherly love turned pugilistic.

This was the year also of the Great Paris International Exhibition, which taught many a lesson beyond and above the mere desire to produce goods for the market, or to manifest the powers man had acquired for the destruction of his fellows. Mechanism, chemistry, and electricity in their numerous applications inevitably held a prominent position. But the French, with the natural aptitude of their race for the display of culture and refinement, had determined that Art should hold the first place all along the line. And they succeeded. The Street of the Nations was nothing short of magnificent in every way. All countries strove to set forth before the coming millions the exquisite architectural beauties, enhanced by the glorious paintings and fine decorations, of their past. It was one long lesson in diversity of faculty, and gave to every one who studied it a higher conception of other men and of himself.

If our own old English country house was almost crushed out by the superb edifices which surrounded it—a result that was predicted to the late King Edward VII. when he insisted upon this homely reproduction representing Great Britain in that majestic array—the pictures and furniture within differed so completely from the rest of the artistic collections, and were so beautiful and harmonious in themselves, that the inadequate simplicity of the building itself was almost forgotten. A leisurely stroll through, and then a careful examination of the treasures in that street, followed by a visit to the wonderful collection of ancient French art in the Petit Palais—I should have liked to communise that Palissy pottery—and the splendid modern sculpture across the way in the

more imposing structure which, like its smaller rival, has become one of the permanent attractions of Paris, formed a delightful introduction to the Socialist Congress, where the possibilities of the future, to those who could appreciate them, transcended by far even these fine productions of the past and of the present. It is only when what has been done under endless difficulties and with imperfect knowledge is thoroughly understood and enjoyed, that the imagination can figure forth to itself, in some degree, the endless vista of splendid achievement which lies before emancipated mankind.

It is always assumed by the educated ignorant that Socialists limit their aspirations to the kitchen and the table, and that their ill-nourished minds make a god of a full belly for their half-fed bodies. Nothing can be more absurd. No sooner does any human being grasp the truths of Socialism than his capacity for the appreciation of beauty in Nature and Art begins to grow. That I have always observed. And many a working man has told me in grim seriousness that what makes him hate the existing social system and the class which administers it so bitterly as to render him, in thought and action, a dynamiter, but for the innate consciousness that this wild justice of revenge could have no permanent effect on the social state, is that he and his have been shut out, not only from complete physical development by insufficiency of food and inadequate clothing and housing, but that all the higher part of his nature has been starved and stunted by privation of any opportunity in childhood and youth for learning to love beauty for its own sake. This does not apply to all, of course: some have been thrust down too deep into the mire to think of anything beyond the immediate needs of the day. But it

affects an ever-increasing number, and these are they who will count in the coming period of social revolt.

The Congress of 1900 was held in the Salle Wagram, a hall devoted for the most part to music and dancing. It cannot be said that the organisation was at all what it ought to have been. In fact, the arrangements could scarcely have been worse, and compared very badly indeed with the admirable dispositions made for the delegates in London. Not even pens and paper and ink could be found, and everything else necessary was similarly lacking. There was, of course, a great deal of grumbling at such unreasonable neglect, but, to do them justice, even the delegates who had come from the greatest distances suppressed their indignant criticisms in order not to give offence to our French comrades. I must here declare, however, that much as I admire and respect France and Frenchmen, I shall feel seriously uneasy if it is proposed we should hold another Congress in the French metropolis. The truth was that the French sections did not even sink their animosities in deference to the duties of hospitality, and, with a lack of a sense of humour, which, I confess, surprised me, gave this as their reason for insufficient preparation.

But there is another truth at the back of this, and that is, French Socialists, even now that they are "unified," are singularly deficient in solidarity and steady organisation. They do wonders on occasion. Their great ideals are ever before them. But the weekly payment of dues to a centre, with punctilious regularity, is a detail which is classed among the non-essentials of Socialist life, and similar lack of business aptitude is to be observed in other directions. As, however, the sections have now come together and seem likely, in spite of deep-

seated differences, to keep together, they may improve in this respect too. Incidentally, I may remark that these differences in themselves arose out of distinct historic causes, and have had grounds for continuance which are quite wanting in other nationalities. Names, like dates, count for a great deal in France. Men like Blanqui and Raspail, St. Simon, Fourier, and Victor Considérant, to say nothing of Proudhon and his Anarchist followers, founded schools of thought which, of necessity almost, degenerated in active life into factions. Their separate existence continued long after their usefulness had disappeared and ought to have been absorbed in the wider movement of organised scientific Socialism, which, by its inclusion of all forms of human endeavour, and even sentiment, should afford an outlet to every faculty.

Other nationalities have not this excuse for segregations in the Socialist ranks, which are in their case almost exclusively due to quite recent personal intrigues and rivalries. That Guesdists, and Possibilists, and Blanquists, and Subversionists (Allemanists), and Parliamentarists, however, should all have joined in bringing about this Paris Congress of the beginning of the century was a good sign of progress. But that they should cease from troubling one another and give peace to the Congress was more than could be expected all at once.

So Paris, like London, witnessed some sharp encounters among the French delegates, which, happily, did not extend to other nationalities. The hall itself was by no means well suited for a Congress of this importance and magnitude, and the method adopted at all these International gatherings made it seem even less satisfactory than under other circumstances it would have been. Commissions are appointed, after the credentials of the delegates are

verified, to examine into, discuss, arrange, and report upon the various suggestions and resolutions submitted to the Congress. These discussions are open to the other delegates, and generally there are two or three of special interest. The rooms where these take place, and in which the principal orators of the Congress meet in friendly conflict, are, as a rule, crowded, leaving the detail business in the main hall to be conducted by a mere handful of those delegates who are less excitable or more conscientious. This is a very bad arrangement, which, in addition to spoiling the appearance of the Congress as a whole, and lowering its tone, necessitates the doing of the same work twice over on the reports of the Commission, and some steps should be taken to reform the procedure.

The principal discussion on this occasion was on the right and advisability of Socialists to join administrations formed by the dominant class, Millerand having lately become a member of the Combes Cabinet. The feeling of the Congress was undoubtedly against any such compromise of principle, except when voted by an overwhelming majority of the party in the country where the opportunity should arise. It is, indeed, difficult to see how a genuine Socialist, opposed to all forms of government based upon capitalist supremacy, can honestly co-operate in making that supremacy more tolerable and therefore of longer duration, unless there should be an overwhelming necessity for such temporary sacrifice in order to avert some great and pressing danger to the Socialist Party itself; though that men and women should join in municipal work, in order to obtain local ameliorative reforms, may seem reasonable, has proved to be advantageous, and does not involve the individual in the same hazardous responsibilities.

But the most important outcome of the 1900

Congress was the establishment of the International Socialist Bureau. This I had personally striven to bring about for many years, in order that the traditions of the "Old International" might be carried on under new and more favourable conditions, and that the great Socialist movement, growing every day more conscious of its own strength and therefore more formidable to those who opposed the inevitable reconstitution of human society, might have a permanent centre—for preparation at first, and, eventually, for thoroughgoing and simultaneous international action. Though at this particular date the conception of such a breaking through of the carapace of capitalism had somewhat faded, and the bourgeois ideal of endless progression by infinitesimal advances dominated many minds, there was still enough of the true scientific spirit in the delegates present to apprehend that these slow, almost imperceptible steps towards the next period of evolution may end, and often have ended, alike in natural and social development, in one sudden and violent attainment of the higher level immediately ahead. That all the great capitals and industrial centres of civilisation might, when the time was ripe, as Bronterre O'Brien first predicted and Marx foresaw, combine in a capable and co-ordinated endeavour to realise, by common concerted action, the overthrow of the effete and outworn, and the building of the foundations of the new and vigorous society, was the idea which underlay in many minds there present the vote in favour of the establishment of the International Socialist Bureau. Brussels was decided upon as the least dangerous, freest, and most convenient seat for the Bureau, and our Belgian comrades proudly accepted the great trust confided to them.

Have I been disappointed? Perhaps it is too early to say. I served myself on the Bureau for

a whole decade. There is to be another International Socialist Congress held at Vienna in 1913.

Two other matters which interested me much came also before this Congress: India, and the South African War. On both questions the Congress was at one with the English delegates; not, as I firmly believe, from any feeling of national repulsion whatever, but because Socialism is opposed to race repression and race aggression in every form and by every nationality. It was in relation to the South African War that the late Pete Curran, afterwards M.P. for Jarrow, performed the feat to which I think I have previously referred. He delivered an impassioned oration against the war, and all who were directly or indirectly responsible for it, with such terrific energy and fire that he roused the enthusiasm of every delegate present, though not one out of ten understood the meaning of a single word he was saying, and sat down amid a thunderous burst of applause. It seemed as if even more than the full spirit of his great namesake's eloquence inspired him on this occasion.

Nothing more surprising or more effective ever was done. He is dead: one of the spent forces of the Socialist movement. He first joined the Social-Democratic Federation in 1884 in Glasgow, and his street-corner speeches were perfect in their way. Parliamentary ambitions and Parliamentary success —Colonel Seely, then as ardent a Conservative as he is now a highly-paid officialist Liberal Cabinet man, congratulated Curran after his first speech upon having so successfully "caught the tone of the House"—ruined Curran, as it has wiped out many an inferior man: that and a tendency to good fellowship and its concomitants, not unusual to his race. But he was a good man, even when gone wrong, and anyhow his speech in Paris in 1900 was one of the features of the Congress. Another was

the solid disciplined front shown as ever by the German battalion. Our French friends could scarcely understand, still less appreciate, this intelligent regimentation, and at such Congresses it has its drawbacks. But that it means business we long ago found out. In spite of certain shortcomings, we all left Paris regretfully, with the strains of "L'Internationale" ringing in our ears.

International Socialist Congresses have a certain similarity about them, and, except for Socialist readers, details of the discussions become very wearisome. In fact, they are wearisome in themselves even to those who take part in them. But the work done is good work, and helps greatly to knit the national parties together. The Amsterdam gathering was no exception to this, and the Congress should be remembered, if only on account of the inexhaustible tact and cheery, humorous vigour of that splendid specimen of a Dutchman, Van Kol, who presided. The decision of the Congress, acted upon since by all but the British groups, that all national sections of Socialists should combine in every country was important and successful. But the acceptance of non-Socialist English Trade Unionists, present by accident in Amsterdam, on their own business, which has led to a complete change in the character of the International Congress, made specially in order to include them, was a great mistake. We left Amsterdam with regret, and with a keen remembrance of the good fellowship and hospitality of our Dutch comrades.

The last Congress I was present at was held at Stuttgart. That involved a long and an expensive journey out and home, and I was agreeably surprised that so many English delegates were able to be present. Up to the last moment we heard from one quarter or another that the King of Würtemberg would never venture to allow such a revolu-

tionary concourse to meet in his dominions; that his own well-to-do subjects would object; that pressure would be brought to bear from Berlin, and so on. Whatever difficulties he may have had to encounter, the king withstood all antagonism, and with an amount of liberality that might have been a good lesson to potentates farther north, Stuttgart was left open to the International Socialist Congress of 1906. The one trifling incident which marred an otherwise perfectly peaceful Congress was the expulsion of Quelch, who referred to the International Arbitration Committee then sitting at The Hague as a "Thieves' Kitchen." This was considered offensive, and the authorities of Würtemberg, not sorry, perhaps, to show that they too had their lines of limitation in the matter of free speech, insisted that the English Social-Democrat should make the best of his way across the German frontier in twenty-four hours. He was given a farewell "punch of honour," followed up by several slaps on the back, and was conducted to the station by quite a large number of Socialists in addition to the police.

It is the fashion to accuse me of having some bitter feeling against Germany, because I have done my very best for many long years, in common with German Social-Democrats, to oppose the militarism of Prussia, which I have always regarded as a menace to the freedoms of Europe. But, as a matter of fact, my friendships with Germans have been both numerous and close, and I like the country and the people. Certainly he must be a hard man to please who does not get on well with the Swabians, as courteous, and well-educated, and charming a folk as I have ever encountered. And Stuttgart with Cannstatt is a delightful place in itself, constituting, as all our working-class dele-

gates themselves quickly recognised, a very pleasing, but in a sense shocking, contrast to the horrors of English manufacturing towns. Trees and pleasant gardens were to be seen at every turn, there was no hideous canopy of smoke to befoul the atmosphere and dim the sun, and the vine-clad hills formed a bright setting to the picture.

The population was suited to its surroundings. There was poverty, no doubt, but it did not obtrude itself upon the visitor as it does with us. The physical development of the men and women was infinitely superior to that which is to be seen so sadly manifested in Lancashire and Yorkshire, as well as in our other industrial regions and in large districts of London. This is chiefly due to the fact that Germany has not yet undergone more than one full generation of fully-developed factory capitalism. But whatever the main reason, and taking everything else into account, no unprejudiced observer can dispute that military drill has a good deal to do with the superior physical development and general carriage of the German men.

This was specially observable at the great open-air meeting, when many thousands of demonstrators marched to the field where the gathering was held in military order. It was a magnificent display of organised peaceful force, and the crowds round the platforms were as attentive and enthusiastic as any that I ever addressed. I was on the same platform with Bernstein, who, in spite of sharp differences, was good enough to say some very flattering things about me. Greulich also, the fine old Swiss leader and poet, was there, and made a great impression. I spoke in German: the crowd was polite enough to behave as if they understood me, and even went so far as to cheer passages in my speech. I was quite gratified also to read in the papers next day

that I delivered myself in "flowing German." Some of the other platforms, notably that where Bebel, the leading German Socialist statesman and orator, addressed the people, were more crowded than ours; but, at all, the disciplined enthusiasm was very impressive, and the idea of thoroughgoing international combination against all attempts to keep the peoples apart by rousing national jealousies was received with deep and unmistakable assent. The speakers were loudly cheered all along the line, as they drove to and from the parade, alike, as it seemed to me, by the Socialists and by those of the townspeople who were only out for a holiday.

It is needless to say that the whole of the Congress arrangements were as perfect as they could be. Whatever feelings I may have had against the German Executive Committee for their most unfair treatment of us English Social-Democrats, in days when their recognition and appreciation would have been a great advantage to us, memory of the difficult and dangerous period we had had to pass through had gradually faded, and I could praise quite ungrudgingly their admirable management of this great international demonstration. Nothing was lacking. Every detail was thought out and elaborated beforehand, any mistakes which occurred by neglect of plain instructions were met and corrected with admirable courtesy, and throughout the whole week it is impossible to speak too highly of the care and consideration shown.

And I am particularly entitled to speak on the matter. I was myself the chairman of the British Section, and had to be in my place at eight o'clock in the morning, and to remain, for the fulfilment of my duties in that capacity, and as a member of the International Bureau, from that early hour until the Congress rose, and sometimes

afterwards. If everything had not gone like clockwork, it would have been impossible to carry out the programme set down for us to get through. We may criticise the Germans as much as we please, and object, as some of our party do, to their cool and almost phlegmatic fashion of conducting their national movement; but when it comes to the unseen work of organisation, or the outside manifestations which call for the most complete voluntary discipline to render them effective, the German Social-Democrats give the lead to all Europe.

The man chiefly responsible for the masterly organisation of this Congress of 1906 was Dietgen, the publisher and philosopher who has devoted his life and fortune to the spread of Socialism and the publication and distribution, generally at heavy loss, of the highest class of Socialist literature, with a persistence rare even in the annals of a party which has given many examples of such work and self-sacrifice. He was ably and loyally supported by local comrades, as well as by those at a distance. From first to last everything went like clockwork.

Here at Stuttgart we saw Bebel and Singer in full vigour, though both of them were, of course, old men. August Bebel I met frequently both at Stuttgart and elsewhere. The impression he gave to most English people present was that he was a rather stern and unapproachable man, with little sense of humour and possibly too full comprehension of his own position in the party, and of the work he had done in the world. This was not my view of him, seen close at hand. In fact, I have rarely met any one who had done so much to be proud of who was so simple and modest in his private conversation, or who took so little upon himself in his everyday intercourse with his fellows. It would have been easily pardonable had he shown some slight

consciousness of his own importance. For Bebel, it may be said, has been with the party from the very beginning, and, starting as a skilled workman, has never allowed his own success in business, or money which came to him quite unsolicited, to divert him for a moment from the great task he set before himself. Unlike Liebknecht, with whom his name will ever be associated, he is no master of languages, and that fact probably has always rendered it somewhat difficult for him to come into intimate relations with men of other nationalities at these Congresses.

His influence over his own party was obviously quite unbounded. To us English perhaps there was a trifle too much of hero-worship and deference in the attitude of German Social-Democrats towards him. That is how I felt myself when I saw their devotion to him at the time. But since then I have come to the conclusion that though, assuredly, there ought to be no sacrifice of equality in a Socialist party, the voluntary respect paid to Bebel was in fact a tribute paid through him to their own organisation and themselves, of whom he was the acknowledged representative; that, moreover, the object of all educated and disciplined democracy is to find the man best suited for the leadership which is essential to all organisation and determined action, and, having found him, to support him loyally, so long as he on his side loyally serves them and the cause. That is what Bebel has done for fifty years, "a great space in the life of a man," and I, for one, appreciating more fully each day that I live the difficulties he had to encounter and the jealousies he had to outlast, even among those who now acclaim him, am glad to be able, as an old Social-Democrat myself, to add my tribute of regard and affection to one of the noblest servants of our cause.

Bebel as an orator shows his innermost personality very clearly. Then the shrewdness, humour, and sarcasm which are ordinarily concealed below an impassive demeanour make themselves apparent. One of the greatest effects ever produced on a platform was when, in answer to some arguments of Jaurès, he suddenly pointed out in the middle of his speech that the French owed their emancipation from the Cæsarism of Napoleon III. to the success of the German armies. This from Bebel, who had gone to prison for protesting furiously against the war with France, was literally overwhelming. Almost too much so, in fact. Though Bebel was, of course, speaking in German, and speaking rapidly also, the meaning of what he said seemed to strike the whole Assembly at once, as if every one present had received a heavy blow. It is no business of mine to discuss here the full bearing of this remarkable pronouncement. I relate only the effect it produced. Bebel's whole performance on this occasion was a masterpiece of oratory —luminous, vigorous, impassioned, hot with the impact of conviction and enthusiasm upon the facts and arguments adduced, and—not too long.

I cannot for the life of me comprehend the love for long speeches. It has been nothing for Bebel to hold forth three, four, five hours on end. Why on earth should listeners want to have it all at once? Surely the orator will live to speak again? Jaurès also takes half a day or so to get into his stride, or I should have said the Germans were the exception in this matter. The ancient Greeks knew something of what public speaking was and ought to be. I doubt, however, if any of their greatest orations took more than two hours to deliver. But then so perfect in matter and form were some of them that the most acute and critical audiences in the world were glad to hear them

again and again. My view of long speeches is that they are the outcome of laziness in the orator—it takes much harder work to compress than to expand—and of imperfect training on the part of the hearers.

But there—I am not writing an essay on the art of oratory. Some day I may. Meanwhile there is Bebel on the platform at Stuttgart, a compact, well-knit, close-shaven figure of a man, of small stature for his race, with a broad forehead, narrowish chin, and rather harsh expression, holding his audience in the hollow of his hand, and rousing his cool, methodical countrymen to the highest pitch of enthusiasm. As he stood there, the great army of the German people formed up behind him in my imagination, and I myself beheld the irresistible Teutonic revolution which Heinrich Heine foresaw and predicted sweeping on majestically to victory down the vista of years to come.

A very different man was Singer. Singer was a Jew, but a very jolly Jew, wholly devoid of those unpleasing characteristics we are apt to associate with men of his race. He had an excellent business which he gave up in order to devote himself wholly to Socialism. I did not consider this was wise, for, after all, if you are obliged to live under capitalism, it is better, as Robert Owen said, and he certainly was no money-lover, to be a slave-driver than a slave. Singer simply replied, with his jovial air, "A man cannot serve two masters," and laughed off any further discussion of the matter. Singer was the chairman of the Stuttgart Congress. In that capacity he was, as a rule, a trifle too much of what the cabman described John Forster, the writer, as being, to Sala, Dicey, and one or two more, at the door of the Reform Club at two o'clock in the morning—"Ain't he just a harbitrary cove?"

Paul Singer when in the chair was emphatically "an arbitrary cove," and at Stuttgart I withstood him to his face when he tried to steam-roller the whole British delegation in much too disciplinary a fashion. We really did protest, all of us together, at that time. And when we did agree our unanimity was certainly wonderful. We increased our stature by a good deal more than the regulation cubit by standing on the chairs and tables, and we made ourselves heard by all the varied arts of homogeneous vociferation which tell at such times. The Germans were very angry, and so was their chairman. Singer's manipulation of his bell was almost entitled to rank with my own tolling down of the Anarchists at the Queen's Hall. But we were quite within our rights, and eventually this was recognised, and the British delegation held its own. Some of Singer's more ardent champions considered that I was specially to blame for this temporary misunderstanding, and, going back to old French history for a term of genial reproach, actually had the audacity to call me a Frondeur.

I submitted to the imputation with even more than my customary meekness, for I reflected that the Fronde did not win, and we did. I say it with the greatest satisfaction that Singer bore no malice against us whatever for having thus upset his autocratic misruling, and I was delighted at the end to propose a hearty vote of thanks to him, and, as it was all over, to give the fullest credit to him for impartiality. His manner of receiving this olive branch was quite charming. Afterwards we had a cordial parting, and I heard of his death with the deepest regret; only sorrowing much that circumstances prevented me from attending the great funeral accorded to him by his fellow Social-Democrats, in token of respect to the departed for his fine work when here.

Many of the papers read and the discussions and reports upon them at Stuttgart were very interesting and important. Here and there, of course, sharp differences of opinion arose. But the main principles of Socialism in all countries—the absolute ownership and control of the great means of creating and distributing wealth by and in the interest of the whole community—were never for a moment in dispute. Those principles, as already said, constitute the unshakable basis of every International Socialist Congress, and it is only on the matter of tactics and methods that discussion can possibly arise. In this Congress at Stuttgart one of the two most difficult questions was the means to be adopted to regulate Emigration and Immigration. This subject is so vast and so complicated, embracing as it does practically the whole civilised world and all its races and nations, that it is scarcely surprising that the Commission, of which I was a member, was unable to do more than formulate in their report certain general recommendations and suggestions, mostly bearing upon the competition of immigrant wage-earners accustomed to existence on a low standard of life. Further dealing with the matter was postponed. No wonder. Emigration and immigration will require a generation at least of investigation to solve the problem, and by that time Socialism will hold a very different position from what it does to-day.

The other serious issue was raised by anti-militarism. Here, once more, the system of full discussion in Commission tended to spoil the main Congress. Delegates were eager to hear what the most eminent disputationists on both sides had to say—at inordinate length—on every phase of this prickly question, and the room in which the preliminary debates were held was crowded all day.

The hero of the fray was Gustave Hervé, who, at any rate, was strictly logical in his view. He argued that no national armies should be kept up, because no nationality under present conditions is worth defending by the people. They would be no more squeezed under German rule than under French, or by a French Republican proconsul than by a German military satrap. Granted the economic assumption of the inevitable outcome of competitive wage-earning, so long as that system of nominally free human slavery endures, and not all the rhetoric or eloquence in the world can add much to this simple statement. The majority of the delegates were not of Hervé's opinion, as many of them exhaustingly expounded, and throughout the Congress felt it was upon treacherous ground, regard being had to the fact that the discussion was being conducted on German territory.

Karl Liebknecht, whose imprisonment and then his electoral triumph at Potsdam have brought his father's honoured name so much to the front, took Hervé's side, but the leaders of his party were opposed to the entire propaganda. For myself, I have always been in favour of the defence of nationality, whether large or small, against external aggression, and the maintenance of an independent, self-respecting and vigorous France seems to me a necessity for progress in Europe. On the report of this Commission the International Bureau, which controlled the proceedings, denied to Hervé the right of reply in full Congress, on account of the misinterpretation that might be put upon his speech and the disadvantage of publicity in such a matter. This, I now consider, was a mistake.

This was the first International Congress at which the United States was at all adequately

represented, and it was pleasant to meet Simons and Hillquit and English Walling and others, some of whom I had known before, all active in the cause, as well as the vehement, not to say vituperative, Daniel de Leon, who came, as we understood, prepared for desperate ventures, but whose most daring exploit was to deliver a long and none too interesting address on the first principles of Socialism to a purely social gathering, to which the English delegates had invited their American brethren. If he had known the extreme difficulty I had as chairman in preventing a brawny and irascible Irishman from falling upon him with true Hibernian vigour for thus "interrupting the harmony of the proceedings," he would even now congratulate himself upon having the uninjured development of nose with which nature provided him. But we all had a very good time, and parted the best of friends.

I lunched the last day very pleasantly with the Guesdists, Guesde himself, Bracke, Rappoport, and others whom I knew well, being present. Not only did we swear an eternal friendship, but we solemnly pledged ourselves, with fraternal enthusiasm, to write regularly for one another's periodicals. Not a line has passed between us from that day to this. I have been no more and no less to blame for it than they. But be it known unto all whom it may concern that the Citizen Edouard Vaillant of Commune of Paris and Peace fame is the only French revolutionary Socialist who ever keeps his promises in the matter of writing to or for his comrades of other lands. Vive Vaillant!

And so my wife and I left Stuttgart weary but in good heart and ready for such encouragement, or disappointment, as the future might bring forth. On our way back we stopped at Strasburg, which

we never pass unless a halt is very inconvenient, in order to see again the old cathedral and the fine old town. And here in Strasburg is another mystery about nationality. The people of Alsace are Germans, whatever the inhabitants of Lorraine may be. Strasburg is a German city of German cities, and all its art is German art, and most of its history German history. Both provinces and city were only conquered and annexed by France within a comparatively recent period. Alsace, this undoubtedly German province, was reconquered by Germany more than forty years ago. While Alsace belonged to France she was by no means well treated, heavily taxed and neglected in many ways. If, also, a stage villain of more than ordinary turpitude was wanted on the French stage, or in a French novel, be sure he was an Alsatian. The manners, accent, character, and methods of the Alsatians were held up to ridicule daily. I remember it all well. Germany has acted quite differently. Instead of draining Elsass—who ever writes Elsass out of Germany?—she has spent money in the province, has cherished Strasburg, has built up a fine University there, and has behaved well to the people generally. Yet they cleave to their French detractors and denounce their German benefactors. And instead of the country becoming more German it is actually becoming more French. There's perversity for you! They would welcome annexation to France tomorrow. Nationality seems an unaccountable factor in this case, I admit.

The last Congress at Copenhagen I did not attend. Some of my Labourist countrymen who were there are convinced I was detained in this island by cowardice. I daresay!

I had thought of giving some account of my experiences on the International Socialist Bureau

on which I sat as a member for ten years; but I despair of making them sufficiently interesting to read. Mere annals are not exhilarating, and polyglot conversations have in them many of the elements of boredom. So I refrain.

CHAPTER VI

ELEANOR MARX AND EDWARD AVELING

THERE are certain episodes in the Socialist movement which up to now have been passed over in silence by those who know the circumstances. This is natural enough; for although sad and unpleasant events occur in connection with all parties, anything ugly which happens in the ranks of Socialists is sure to be treated by the outside world as if this were the rule rather than the exception with men and women who hold our obnoxious opinions. When the Communists were imprisoned in Paris the ordinary pickpockets and thieves who were incarcerated with them at once boycotted them. "We," said they, "at any rate respect private property, though we do now and then effect a change of ownership without consulting the individual proprietors; but these scoundrels would grab all riches and leave nothing for us to steal. Away with such wholesale malefactors!" That is pretty much the view still taken by the ignorant of Socialists and Communists forty years later; so it is perhaps as well they do not advertise one another's shortcomings unduly.

At any rate, the story of Eleanor Marx's life and death has never been told, and I think the time has now come for telling it, if only in justice to her. Eleanor was the youngest of the three daughters of Marx and his wife. I first made her

acquaintance in her father's house, when she was quite a girl, and got to know her very well afterwards, until her lamented death; though for some years in the interim I saw little of her. Eleanor's two sisters, Mme. Longuet and Mme. Lafargue, being married, she was the only one at home, and she to a large extent conducted her father's correspondence, and became, in a sense, the centre of that curious and capable family clique which carried on the traditions of the "Old International" throughout Europe; after the break-up of the organisation, or its transfer to New York, which meant the same thing.

Eleanor herself was the favourite of her father, whom she resembled in appearance as much as a young woman could. A broad, low forehead, dark bright eyes, with glowing cheeks, and a brisk, humorous smile, she inherited in her nose and mouth the Jewish type from Marx himself, while she possessed a physical energy and determination fully equal to his own, and an intelligence which never achieved the literary or political success—for she was a keen politician as well as sociologist—of which she was capable. Possibly, she felt herself somewhat overshadowed by her father's genius, whose defects she was unable to see. She was quite angry with me, I remember, when, after the prolonged misunderstanding due to her attaching herself to the Socialist League, we again became friendly, because I would not review the great tome into which she had piously gathered Marx's letters and disquisitions on the Eastern Question. The book was not, in my opinion, worthy of its author, and as, in any criticism, I should have felt myself constrained to say so, I preferred not to say anything about it at all. She was very angry, I repeat, and declared my refusal was due partly to laziness and partly to incapacity to appreciate

the book. I admired her filial devotion so much that I allowed her to have the last word, which, in any case, feminine fashion, she would have taken without my consent.

Her own power of work was inexhaustible, and knowing well all the leading European languages, and possessing an intimate acquaintance with the details of the movement in all countries, especially of course from the Marxist side, she was exceedingly valuable to the cause, and would have been still more valuable in the years which have passed since her death.

About Edward Aveling it is difficult to write with patience, even now that he has so long passed away. That he was a man of ability is unquestionable. His degree of Doctor of Science at London University was, I believe, thoroughly well gained, and though deficient in initiative and originality, his power of exposition in departments which he had mastered was second to that of no one I ever heard. When I first knew him he was one of the members of the great Trinity in Unity—three persons and no God—consisting of Bradlaugh, Annie Besant, and Aveling, which vivified and controlled the most active and influential portion of the Secularist party. The way in which they all three played into one another's hands and glorified each other's faculties might be taken as an abiding lesson how to make the most of combined intellectual effort.

After my first debate with Bradlaugh, in 1884, Aveling set to work to study Socialism. I had myself previously supported him for the London School Board, on the secular and free education platform, as candidate for Westminster, and he succeeded in winning the seat. He then discovered that Socialism was the necessary constructive correlative of the purely negative and destructive

Secularism, and joined the party. I have never from that day to this thoroughly understood why he did so. That his motives were in the main good I have no reason to doubt, even to-day; for he was quite acute enough to perceive that no personal advantage was to be gained by it, at any rate immediately, and he had a very promising outlet with the Radicals, which could scarcely have failed to have been advantageous; the rather that he had, as was said of a much more prominent person, "no scruples whatsoever to restrain him." But he became a Socialist, joined the S.D.F., and having previously known Eleanor Marx, became still more intimate with her.

I am bound to say I did not like the man from the first. "Nobody can be so bad as Aveling looks" was a remark which translated itself into action in my case. In spite of the most unpleasant rumours about his personal character, alike in regard to money and sexual relations, I put compulsion on myself and forced myself to believe that I was prejudiced unduly by his personal appearance, and that his forbidding face could not in truth be an index to his real character. So he became an influential member of our body and had a seat on its Executive, though several old Secularists, who were then with us, distrusted him utterly. Precisely when he and Eleanor Marx decided to live together as man and wife, without the inconvenient restrictions, as they both considered them, sanctioned by modern bourgeois society and its prevailing creed, I do not know; but it is certain that it was widely and strongly felt that Eleanor's friends and relations should have done their utmost to prevent the alliance which ended so terribly for her.

The feeling about him was wittily expressed when, as he was leaving the S.D.F. rooms one

evening a black silk scarf which he wrapped round his throat falling to the ground, it was picked up and handed to him. Quoth Aveling, "I am so much obliged to you for preventing what would have been to me a serious loss: the scarf belonged to the great doctor and came to me from him." "Then you may rightly say it has descended," was the retort. As to his influence over Eleanor Marx, it can only be said that Aveling was one of those men who have an attraction for women quite inexplicable to the male sex. Like Wilkes, ugly, and even repulsive to some extent, as he looked, he needed but half an hour's start of the handsomest man in London; and Eleanor, capable and brilliant as she was, could not be spoken of as by any means the only attractive person who had come under his fascination. Some of the scandals arising from this faculty of his were very serious. His proceedings with regard to money entrusted to him were likewise very objectionable. Notably so in the case of the sum subscribed for a cablegram to the Governor of Illinois, signed by a number of very well-known men in different departments of politics and literature begging that functionary at the last moment to pardon Parsons and his co-defendants. Aveling pocketed the money and the cablegram was never sent at all!

Nevertheless, the man worked hard for Socialism, and lectured, at great cost of time and labour to himself, all over the country. He continued to do this when both Eleanor Marx and he were very short of money indeed, and their existence had become exceedingly trying in consequence of his extravagance. She stuck to him stoutly through all difficulties, though there can be no doubt that she underwent deterioration by close association with a man of Aveling's character. When, however, she recognised the danger into which she

was running, she pulled herself together in a most surprising way and did her best to strengthen him as she recovered her own equilibrium. This in my opinion was the most remarkable instance I ever encountered of strength of character in a woman overcoming, and finally mastering, a pernicious influence which had gone far to wreck her life. It was wonderful to witness. Unfortunately it did not go the length of emancipating her from him altogether. I wish it had.

When the Socialist League, founded by William Morris in 1884-85, fell to pieces, Eleanor Marx and Aveling wished to rejoin the Social-Democratic Federation. By this time the latter had acquired such a very unsavoury reputation that the entire Executive Council were opposed to admitting him. The worst features of his career, however, it was impossible to make public without bringing in other people; but quite enough was known to render his exclusion, to say the least of it, highly desirable. But the facts that he was associated with Eleanor Marx, and that he was a good lecturer, that also Liebknecht, Kautsky, Bernstein, Motteler, Lessner, Lafargue, Guesde, and other esteemed comrades wrote strong letters supporting him as a man of the highest ability and character, induced the members of the body to override entirely the views of the Executive they had themselves chosen, and Aveling became again active in the S.D.F. We were all of us accused of being jealous of him, and at the next Conference of the organisation he was elected by the assembled delegates at the head of the poll for the Executive Council of the following year! I think it says a very great deal for the self-sacrifice and loyalty of those whose judgment and authority were thus gratuitously flouted, that they put up with this unmerited rebuff and actually worked with the

man whom they knew to be a downright scoundrel. But it is very doubtful whether they were right in thus giving way to the wishes of the majority. In fact, events proved that they were wrong. The whole episode increased my own contempt for uneducated and undisciplined democracy.

By the inheritance of a substantial legacy from Engels, the fortunes of the Avelings, who were always considered as man and wife, were, of course, much improved. But Aveling himself, sad to say, did not improve with them. He continued his loose life, extravagance, and addiction to strong liquor, and at length, naturally enough, his health gave way seriously. This led eventually to a crucial operation at the Middlesex Hospital. It was touch and go, and there is no doubt that, but for the extraordinary skill of Christopher Heath in the operation, and the almost equally extraordinary devotion of Eleanor Marx afterwards, Aveling would have died at that time. How Eleanor went through what she did during this period, and kept her health and sanity, I do not comprehend.

My wife, at her request, went to see Aveling as he lay in bed, and afterwards they walked up and down the corridor of the Hospital for a long time. The story Mrs. Aveling told was most distressing. She was not at all the sort of woman to give way under trials, or to make a confidant of another person, no matter how much she may have felt the strain. But she evidently had to open her heart to somebody, and the tale she told of the misery and humiliation she had to undergo induced my wife to implore her to leave the man directly he was out of danger, and to come for a time to stay with us. She said she would gladly do so, and, though my wife was quite unnerved by what she had heard, we both hoped that an end had come to Mrs. Aveling's martyrdom, and that

she really would give up her hopeless fighting against fate.

It was not to be. With the tenacity of her race she stuck to her consort; took him down to Margate, nursed him, waited upon him, read to him, petted him—when all the time she knew perfectly well that he was only waiting for his convalescence to go off with another woman! Such fidelity was beyond all question almost criminal weakness, such as might not have been expected from a woman of her calibre. On their return to London we hoped to hear from and see Eleanor, but unluckily for her and us she kept away.

And thus the tragedy hurried to its end. I read the miserable story as follows, and in my opinion no other solution is possible. Aveling told Eleanor that the marriage with another woman, of which she had heard, had been forced upon him. There was nothing for it but that they should commit suicide together. How Aveling persuaded Eleanor to adopt this mad course no one has ever been able to understand. She was in perfect health, and, as the post-mortem examination proved, her body with its organs was so sound in every way that she might well have lived to the age of 90 or 100. Not only so, but the very last time I talked with her, before I saw her corpse, apparently asleep and quite unlike death, lying on her bed, she had spoken enthusiastically of the coming time in which she hoped to be more useful to the movement than she had ever been before. She must have been subjugated by some strange hypnotic influence. However that may be, the end came in this tragic way quite unnecessarily.

Aveling, it may be added, had acquired at this time the power of writing so exactly like his wife that it was extremely difficult even for one who knew them both to tell the handwriting of one

from that of the other. Personally, I could not distinguish them. Who actually wrote the order for the poison, therefore, nobody can now say. Aveling always declared he did not. But there can be no doubt whatever that Aveling himself took the message to the chemist for the prussic acid and chloroform, which poor Eleanor thought she and he were both to take. At any rate the poison was bought. Eleanor swallowed her fatal dose and died immediately. Aveling did not touch his. He rushed off immediately to the train, went straight to the office of the Social-Democratic Federation in Bolt Court, Fleet Street, and called Lee the Secretary's attention to the exact time of his visit.

The funeral, which was largely attended, gave Aveling the opportunity for displaying an amount of histrionic grief and real callousness which disgusted everybody; and none were more bitter against him—for the circumstances of Eleanor's suicide were now generally known—than the foreign Socialists, who had made him out to be a man of the very highest character. The inquest, of course, had disclosed nothing beyond the fact of the suicide; and as Eleanor's brothers-in-law did not see fit to rake up the facts, going off, in fact, to drink with Aveling after the inquest at an adjacent public-house, there was nothing to be done.

"God made Napoleon Buonaparte and then he rested," said one of the French Mayors when he welcomed the great First Consul to his city. "A pity," quoth Chateaubriand, "he had not rested a little before." A pity, assuredly, that the same omnipotent influence had not allowed Christopher Heath's knife to slip or brought about Aveling's final departure "a little before." Aveling inherited what was left of the Engels' legacy, and within a month or so after having taken up with his new

wife he was dead himself. "The evil that men do lives after them."

The death of Eleanor Marx was a very serious blow to the movement. Sorrow and suffering had softened her nature without diminishing her earnestness and enthusiasm. She would have done great things had she lived.

Strange to say, a few years later, in 1911, her sister Laura, the wife of Paul Lafargue, came to her end under circumstances almost equally tragic. When Mme. Lafargue inherited her share of Engels' fortune, amounting to about £7000, Lafargue, then an old man, divided it up into ten equal portions—the idea of purchasing a good annuity apparently never occurred to him—and decided that when these came to an end, having reached the age of seventy, he would commit suicide. His wife was determined she would not survive him. So the pair of them went out of the world by their own volition, and were found, both of them, lying fully dressed quite dead in their bedrooms. Lafargue died because, as he said, he could not bear to face the coming period of decrepitude and senility. But he really seems to have prepared poverty quite unnecessarily for himself and his wife, and did not care to live in it. Curiously enough, Lafargue, with all his very considerable ability, never produced a deep impression in Paris.

The Parisians believed him to be a miser, and talked of him as *le petit épicier*, which was grossly unfair. Neither did he exercise the influence to which his knowledge and capacity entitled him in the general Socialist movement. Why this was so I confess myself unable to say. I always found him clever, clear-minded, pleasing in manner, and with a complete command of easy and witty conversation. He was also a bright, if not even a brilliant speaker. Yet, in spite of all the work he

had done for the movement, and his relationship to Marx, the facts were as I state them. Mme. Lafargue was the prettiest of the three Marx daughters, and inherited some of her mother's charm and knowledge of the world. She also was by no means deficient in ability. The only descendants of Marx now left are the children of Mme. Longuet, of whom Jean Longuet and his family are well known in the movement. Charles Longuet, the father, was a member of the Commune, and became, during his years of exile, thanks to the efforts of the Positivists, Professor of French at the University of London.

Taken as a whole, the record of the Marx family has been one of the tragedies of Socialism.

CHAPTER VII

THE SOUTH AFRICAN WAR

I HAVE always had a bitter aversion from the policy of drift in public affairs, and more especially in foreign and colonial business. Lord Melbourne's "Can't you leave it alone?" may be a very suggestive and valuable question for an otiose cynic to propound in quiet times: the game of procrastination is frequently, though not always, successful in home politics. But when matters which are dependent upon others are concerned, in which their ideas, their wishes, and even their prejudices, are involved, it is well to have some sort of notion what line you intend to take from the start, and to vary your course, though you do not change your aim, in accordance with circumstances as they arise. All that seems to me common sense degenerating into platitude.

When the late Max O'Rell wrote about South Africa, after his visit to that part of the world, he commented upon the admirable patience and quiet determination with which our policy was being conducted there. John Bull was lying low, he said; but he could afford to wait for the gradual working out of natural causes, which all told in his favour. In this way, without force, and almost without pressure, J. B. would come into his heritage of the southern portion of the great African Continent. And so, no doubt, it would have been,

but for the most exasperating sequence of blunders and crimes of which our history shows any record.

From the mere State policy point of view, that Great Britain should have destroyed the fine fighting organisation of the great Kaffir tribes for the benefit of the Boers, whose power we thus strengthened, without having made any arrangement whatever with the two Dutch Republics beforehand, was a piece of folly so palpable that it is marvellous even to-day that it should ever have been committed. So long as the Kaffir Kingdom lasted, the Kaffirs served as a make-weight against the Dutch, who had seized their land and had enslaved many of their people. The possibility of an arrangement between the two races was inconceivable, and the Dutch stood in the front rank of defence against Kaffir attack. This calculation of forces may have been unscrupulous, but it was upright policy compared to what followed.

It so happens that I had the opportunity of looking at what was going on in South Africa, from quite an independent point of view, long before the great gold-field of the Rand was developed, and before even the consolidation of the mines at Kimberley had put the markets of the world in diamonds at the disposal of the de Beers combination. It interests me, however, to recall that my friend Alfred Renshaw, the solicitor, with some others, tried hard but vainly to bring about that very understanding as to diamond sales which afterwards was so extraordinarily successful and advantageous to its promoters, some years before this result was achieved. What, however, directed my attention specially to South Africa was the fact that Mr. Moody, who had, or thought he had, some very extensive and valuable concessions from the Portuguese Government, came to

me in the early 'seventies and endeavoured to induce me to take an interest in the Delagoa Bay Railroad, with the lands granted in connection with it — a project which was afterwards taken up by the American Colonel McMurdo.

I was an Imperialist in those days, believed in the beneficent influence of the British flag and the glories of British rule all over the world, considering, indeed, that our expansion was good alike for governors and governed. The scheme also seemed to me likely to be extremely profitable. So I went thoroughly into the whole subject of South Africa as it then stood, and studied the situation as well as I could. In this, of course, for his own objects, I had all the assistance Mr. Moody, who knew the country well, could give me. The Portuguese, however, were as reluctant then as they were later to put the concessions upon proper lines, and the whole thing fell through.

But my study of the Transvaal and its relations to surrounding peoples and territories was by no means useless; for it taught me, among other things, that the Boers were just as likely to yield to any attempt to impose British rule upon them as their forbears and themselves were, when they trekked out into the wilderness to get away from us long ago; that the disaster of Majuba Hill was no such accident as it appeared to be at the time; and that, as with the American Colonists more than a century before, we should make a very great mistake if we imagined that these farmers were not fully a match on their own ground for British troops in much greater numbers, who had no more experience of fighting on the Veldt than their forerunners had in the American backwoods.

But all this is now of the past, and is well put in Sir William Butler's warnings and in the reports of the much-abused Intelligence Department just

before the Transvaal War. I only refer to it now because there is nothing I have ever done that I look back upon with more genuine satisfaction than my opposition to that shameful and disastrous campaign. All can see to-day that it was as unnecessary as it was foolish and costly. A more hollow agitation than that about the unfair treatment of the Europeans and Jews at Johannesburg never was started even in the English press. The best evidence of that is that the white workers were quite satisfied, and I never could get any trustworthy evidence of wrong done by the Boers, even from those who were most vehemently attacking them.

The white miners and other white employees on the Rand were, I say, quite contented with Boer rule. They were more than contented: they were strongly in favour of it, and for very good reasons. The local Boer Courts were always fair to the wage-earners, restricted the hours of labour, favoured a living rate of wages, and took the side of the labourers rather than that of the employers in any dispute which might arise. We Socialists had frequent letters to this effect, and it is not too much to say that the whole of the white population of Johannesburg not directly interested in reducing wages and extending the hours of labour, were opposed to putting the control of the mines, to say nothing of the whole government of the Transvaal, at the mercy of the millionaire magnates of the Rand, who were not only distrusted but disliked and contemned. Yet, for a long time prior to the raid, the English papers, supplied with information by the clique on the Board of the Chartered Company, consisting of Lord Grey, Mr. Rochfort Macguire, and their friends, who, at the instigation of Mr. Cecil Rhodes and Mr. Alfred Beit, were preparing for an attack upon Boer inde-

pendence, continually asserted that the whole white population of Johannesburg was boiling over with indignation at the shameful tyranny of President Kruger and his friends. This, as the event proved, was a lie—a lie which some of us tried hard at the time to expose by simply telling the truth.

The extraordinary part of the matter is that the agitation in the first instance was not got up with a view to extending the influence of the British Government at all. On the contrary, the idea then in vogue, to be carried out after the Rhodes-Beit plot had succeeded, was to establish a great South African Republic, with Cecil Rhodes as its first President. Dr. Jameson, who, since Mr. Rhodes's death, has been the leading Imperialist hero, actually had the impudence to put this quite plainly in a speech he delivered at a banquet at the Imperial Institute at the end of 1894, when the late King, then Prince of Wales, was present, speaking of the "Imperial factor" as a most objectionable influence. But nobody protested.

The intrigues and agitation went on. Machine guns and other arms were bought by the Chartered Company, after Lobengula had been defeated and his power crushed, for no purpose which could be disclosed. Everything, in fact, was being worked up for a sudden rush on Johannesburg, and it was absurd to suppose that the Boers were not aware of what was being prepared for them. It was still declared by the plotters that, when the prospect of deliverance loomed up on the horizon, the whole white population of Johannesburg would rise in revolt as one man. A friend of mine who was well aware that those with whom he was associated were playing a desperate game, did his best to check this conspiracy against a friendly and independent State. The Colonial Office was, of course, entirely opposed to the whole rash enter-

prise, but apparently would not use its power to prevent the development of the scheme, by threatening the Chartered Company with the loss of its Charter if any of its Directors or Agents pursued this mad policy any further. The ring of conspirators carried on their settled plans, therefore, quite regardless of good faith, the welfare of the country, or even of the Company's real interests in South Africa.

And so the notorious and infamous piratical adventure known as the Jameson Raid occurred. Thanks to the prompt repudiation of its Chairman, the Company saved its Charter when the raid took place; but now that the mass of the people in this island seem likely to have a word to say ere long as to how their business shall be conducted in the future, it might be well that all the incidents connected with the steps that led up to the South African War should be examined into and published. Such an investigation would show the entire absence of any control over the machinations of high-placed "Imperialists."

No expedition more ridiculous in its beginning or more cowardly in its end than the Jameson Raid was ever heard of. Its leaders, as I was myself informed by one who could scarcely have failed to know the truth, inasmuch that he went from Johannesburg to urge them to go back, and saw them and spoke to them both before and after their surrender to a mere handful of Boers—its leaders, I say, were drunk on the march and gave in the moment they were challenged by the men whom they had come from the border to rout. A boozy gang of piratical adventurers indeed, as destitute of courage as they were devoid of conduct!

The Boers, with weak magnanimity, did not shoot or hang the chief miscreants. They handed them over to the British Government, confident that

justice would be done to them. So Dr. Jameson and Major Willoughby were brought to England, and instead of being condemned as they ought to have been to penal servitude for life, they were sentenced to a light and comfortable detention, and came out to be made the heroes of London Society. Nothing more detestable or disloyal was ever done.

Then, naturally enough, the Boers believed that the British Government and the British people were favourable to the marauders, and would next employ the British forces to crush their independence and seize their country. They therefore, naturally too, used the funds which they derived from taxes on the mines in their territory to purchase quantities of arms, and to put themselves generally in a posture of defence.

What followed is known to all the world. At first nobody believed it was possible that a war for the sake of the gold-mines in the Transvaal could be waged. Not only was the Cabinet as a whole against it, seeing that campaign would be entered upon solely in the interest of a set of the most unscrupulous international financiers and mine-exploiters that ever was known, but Mr. Chamberlain, on his appointment to the Colonial Office when the Tories came into power, showed he was by no means inclined to give way to the policy of Mr. Cecil Rhodes and his clique. There was quite a feeling of relief when this was discovered, and many who had previously distrusted the Birmingham politician were bound to admit they had misread his character. Unluckily this policy of fair dealing as between the Boers and the British gave way by degrees to a totally different method.

The various causes which brought about the change it would be useless, even if it were possible, now to investigate. Certain it is, however, that the Colonial Secretary was persuaded, and persuaded

himself, that the Boer leaders would probably give way if sufficiently threatened; that if they did not they would only carry on hostilities until the crops were ready to carry; and that in any case the Orange Free State would not join with the Transvaal. Consequently, when the Boers continued surreptitiously to arm as completely as they could, Mr. Chamberlain, relying upon the information received from Messrs. Wernher, Beit & Co., and others, upon whom he ought not to have relied, steadily drifted towards war.

How contemptibly shortsighted the whole of the action of the Minister really responsible was at this time is apparent from one single instance. President Kruger paid his private Secretary £700 a year. It was of the last importance to know what Kruger was actually doing. So the Secretary was paid £1400 to betray Kruger. He took his £1400 a year comfortably enough and—carefully betrayed his foreign paymasters. In this way: The great question when the situation became critical was whether President Steyn of the Orange Free State and the rulers of that Republic would forget their quarrels with the Transvaal Boers and join with them in resistance to the British, or whether they would remain neutral during the struggle. The British Agent in the Orange Free State, a well-known officer, kept on warning his Government that whatever they might imagine or be told, President Steyn had made up his mind to fight side by side with the Transvaal Boers. The Cape Government and the Home Government, relying upon their superior bought information, were quite as certain that no such combination would come about and that the Boers would only hold out for a few months at the outside. So Mr. Chamberlain began his campaign of bluff which culminated in a campaign of blood and disaster.

Ugly rumours began to fly around in the summer of 1899 as to the sinister intentions of Mr. Chamberlain and Lord Milner. It was believed, rightly or wrongly, by those who had excellent sources of information, that so early as May 1899 war against the Boers had been virtually resolved upon by the Colonial Secretary, and that he was actively engaged in exciting public opinion and in finding an excuse for the commencement of hostilities should, in spite of everything, his bluff fail.

For this reason, in July 1899, the Social-Democratic Federation held a demonstration in Trafalgar Square, passed resolutions strongly urging that peace should be maintained at all hazards, and protesting against Mr. Chamberlain being left in sole control of the situation during the Parliamentary recess. Many members of Parliament who were known to be bitterly hostile to any aggressive action were invited to come. Only two came. At that time Mr. Chamberlain was still giving in private his vehement assurances to Liberal leaders and others that peace would certainly be preserved. Throughout the whole of this period, however, as already said, his bought information from the Boer side was wholly untrustworthy, and it is possible he honestly believed he could win by the sheer bluff which had stood him in such good stead throughout his business experience and in his political career. If so, he was completely deceived. But all Social-Democratic and Radical protest was quite unavailing. Mr. Chamberlain was practically left by the Government in complete control, and, at the most critical moment of all, Lord Milner was sent up to negotiate with Mr. Kruger at Bloemfontein.

This was fatal. Lord Milner is one of those men who are by nature and training prigs. His entire career, up to the time of his being unex-

pectedly pitchforked by personal intrigue into the most difficult administrative and diplomatic post in the British Empire, had been that of a well-spoken and accommodating desk-man. He had been journalist, private secretary, accountant, and so on, and that was all. He knew no more of the business of governing than he did of the practice of diplomacy. Perfectly honest in money matters no doubt, but combining in his own person all the drawbacks of the German bureaucrat with the learned ignorance of Balliol superiority, he was precisely the worst exponent of British policy who could have been chosen to send to negotiate with the wily old Dutch peasant Kruger, even if he had not already shown himself bitterly prejudiced against the Boers. War was certain if he went.

So strongly did I feel about this that, as a mere outsider but still a taxpaying Englishman, I wrote to Lord Salisbury, who had gone out of his way to be very friendly to me, through Sir George Kellner, many years before, imploring him as Prime Minister, and therefore chiefly responsible for the policy pursued in South Africa, to take this matter into his own hands, and to send quite a different man to talk with the President of the Dutch Republic. It so happened there was at that time, unemployed and open for the work, an English peer who was likewise that very rare bird in the world, a Dutch nobleman: who was so much Dutch that he spoke, and for aught I know, speaks to-day, our language with a strong Dutch accent.

He had been brought up to diplomacy, had filled successfully the position of Governor of an important province, was extremely urbane, courteous, and open-minded, was eager for peace and certain to carry out even unpleasant instructions in a pleasant way. In spite of the fact that he was a Liberal, he had also the reputation of being an

honest and straightforward man of affairs. This was Lord Reay. I therefore begged Lord Salisbury in my letter to substitute Lord Reay for Lord Milner in this mission to Paul Kruger.

I had reason to know that the old Dutch President would have regarded such a special envoy from England with favour, and his going would have greatly strengthened the hands of Joubert and others on the Boer side, who, notwithstanding foreign semi-assurances of support, were entirely opposed to war. It did not need much imagination, I thought, to comprehend that the Dutch nobleman, Baron Mackay, as Lord Reay was, would have an infinitely better chance of success with a man who was a Hollander by descent, than a narrow-minded and obstinate "superior person" like Lord Milner, if a peaceful settlement were really desired. Lord Salisbury would not interfere. Mr. Chamberlain was resolved upon having war at all costs. So Lord Milner went his way to make that war certain. He succeeded.

It was in a second endeavour on the part of Social-Democrats and extreme Radicals to prevent war that I had a narrow escape of losing the number of my mess. The incident arose thus: Our meeting of protest in July had been peaceful and unanimous, though very numerous. The arrangements were in our hands, and feeling then was not hot. The meeting of September 1899, also in Trafalgar Square, was called and organised by the Radicals, and feeling by that time had become very hot indeed. Moreover, the Jingoes were naturally anxious to show that the peace party had no real support among the people of London. I heard that an attempt would be made to break up the meeting, and I suggested to the Radical organisers that it would be well to take special precautions.

It was a great mistake on the part of us Social-Democrats not to have taken those precautions ourselves. We ought to have had in the Square enough men of our own to keep order some time before the gathering, which we could easily have done.

Unfortunately for us, what the Radicals failed to do and we had omitted to arrange, was done by our opponents. When the speakers ascended to the base of Nelson's Monument they found that they were face to face with a hostile and a howling mob. I did not like the look of things at all to begin with. I liked it still less when these people, many of whom were half-drunk—they had been brought up from the East End at the cost of half-a-crown or so a head and unlimited liquor — began to throw open knives at us. Soutter, who organised the meeting and behaved with admirable coolness and courage throughout, endeavoured to get a hearing and to appeal for decent conduct. Then each of us had a try in turn. It was quite useless. The crowd had evidently been brought there to shout us down and shout us down they did; while, their supply of more lethal missiles being exhausted, potatoes, apples, etc., rained upon us in quantity.

At last it became quite clear that we should never get a hearing that day, and I for one began to consider seriously how we were to get away safely through the mob. Much as I have frequented crowds, I am never at ease in them, even when they are quite peaceful and friendly. This crowd was very much the reverse of being either, and as I was pretty well known as a vehement anti-war man and wore besides that distinguishing, though certainly not distinguished, headgear known to the French as a *chapeau à huit reflêts*, I felt pretty sure that I should have an ugly time of it

when I descended. So it turned out. Directly I got down a lot of roughs made for me, and if it had not been for the late H. R. Taylor and another Socialist whose name I never knew, I should have been knocked down and seriously injured before I got out of the Square. Then the mounted police took a hand in the business, and, escorted by a few friends, I, in company with Mr. Felix Moscheles, who took the whole thing very philosophically, got first to the Hôtel Victoria, where the guests jeered at us and the porters shut the doors in my face, and then, still accompanied by the mob and protected by police, I found myself in the police station hard by old Scotland Yard. It was not a very dignified ending to an attempt to stem a mad and wicked war-mania, and recalled similar experiences, notably one at Battersea, when I first began to speak on Socialism in the very early days of the movement. It is quite possible to have adventures even in prosaic London, if you will persist in acting upon principle and in taking the unpopular side.

But I am glad and proud to say this misadventure, though it greatly encouraged Mr. Joseph Chamberlain's fire-eating and firewater-drinking fuglemen, did not in the least daunt us. On the contrary, we made up our minds to oppose this infamous war to the last; but we also made up our minds that those who next attacked us, either indoors or out of doors, should have something to remember us by. We had not long to wait for the opportunity. A big indoor meeting, at which I was to speak, was held at Mile End. The hall was attacked in force by a very large body of people of similar character and opinions to those who assailed us in Trafalgar Square, more sober though not less vicious. Happily, a double staircase led up to the hall above, by which our in-

furiated anti-Boers could alone obtain access to the meeting. This staircase was occupied by our people and a very pretty fight indeed followed the attempted assault. I rejoice even now to remember that quite a number of Jingoes were sent to hospital on that occasion, and the memory of the conflict still lingers in the minds of men on both sides. It was indeed an admirably managed affair on our side, our men of peace coming up in disciplined relays to the fray as those in front got weary of pummelling the Jingo stormers.

Some of them boxed beautifully. The performance of one comrade, Simms, was particularly gratifying, and, I believe, gained quite a harvest of fees for dentists in the immediate neighbourhood next morning. So successful was our fighting brigade then and shortly thereafter that the word went round to let Social-Democratic meetings alone, except in cases where trained pugilists could be cheaply hired to support the principles of Birmingham and the Cecils. In fact to such an extent did the fame of our people for keeping the peace by effective argument spread in the Metropolis that Radicals used to beg us to come and protect their meetings for them. This, when those meetings were really serious, we frequently did, as both at the time and since they have themselves handsomely acknowledged.

One of the best-managed of our meetings in the matter of interruption and also in dealing with interrupters was that held at Shoreditch Town Hall. There too a mob tried to force an entrance and were dealt with as faithfully as their forerunners at Mile End. But the arrangements inside, conducted by George Lansbury, then an active member of the S.D.F., were the best I ever saw. It was known that some disturbers were present. They were given fair warning, and then,

the moment they started to make a noise, the stewards, told off for their respective portions of the hall, just ran them out and threw them down to the Jingoes in attendance. However, all our efforts of protest were vain. Furious chauvinism seemed to have got hold of a large proportion of the people, and there we were, a great Empire involved in a "great" war with a population of farming folk no bigger than that of Brighton all told.

I suppose all wars involve a vast amount of malversation, but the South African War was unusually prolific in priggery in high places. I myself possess conclusive evidence as to the nefarious practices which went on for the benefit of men and women occupying the very highest and most influential positions, and engaged at the time, that was the irony of it, in vehemently denouncing all who opposed the commencement and the continuance of the war as unpatriotic little Englanders who ought to be strung up. I could, if I chose, name and expose at least one person who, accepting a dominant post when in debt to the tune of fully £80,000, left it, from no source whatever that could be honourably disclosed, a very rich man. And there are many others. But the law of libel in this country has been so artfully composted, in the sole interest of eminent misappropriators, that I confess I am not prepared to sacrifice myself on this issue. I will only state one of the numerous cases of pilfery and corruption which came under my own eye—one of actual fact which can easily be verified, and which, as I here personally state, is only a mild specimen of what went on.

The Government wanted a large supply of tinware for the campaign. A friend of mine who was thoroughly versed in this department offered the whole quantity needed at the rate of 8s. 6d.

for a fixed amount of ware. His proposal was curtly declined. A little later a gentleman—all the agents of official malefaction are technically "gentlemen"—came to him, and asked him the lowest price of these very same goods. My friend told him the rate — 8s. 6d. This "Man in the Moon" at once contracted for the whole lot, and dumped it all in upon the nation at the rate of a neat and compact sovereign for what cost him less than half this sum. This worthy had, of course, approached the actual purchasers "through the proper quarters." As to the woman influence, that too was sinister enough. It was a matter of common knowledge that society dames of the most irreproachable elegance and virtue were in receipt of heavy bribes during the whole of this shameful business. Here again, though proof is not so easy, I could give some very interesting, not to say entertaining, facts. I confine myself only to hearsay. At the height of the war fever I was dining at the Carlton Hotel, which that evening was crowded with well-known and, in a sense, eminent, or, at any rate, prominent, people.

A very old friend with whom I had been intimate from my youth up, and whose knowledge of the inner circle of the high society into which he was born was second to that of no man in England, was dining there too. Capable, well-read, cynical, and rich, of the self-indulgent but self-controlled type depicted by more than one novelist, accident had thus thrown in my way a very good chance of getting incidental confirmation of that which in other fashion I knew better than he. Our people, I may say, do not go about everywhere with the words "I am a Social-Democrat" emblazoned across their abdomens. They are not always eager for self-advertisement in that capacity. The man I speak of caught sight of me,

and at once came over to speak to me. We had a longish chat together, and I asked him towards the end of it, in an offhand way, how many of the highly-cultured and charming ladies present that evening were, in his opinion, more or less indebted to the South African gang. Looking round carefully, he replied, "A goodish lot, I should say."—"Twenty per cent?"—"More than that certainly," after taking a still more careful survey.

The answer was what I anticipated; but as we stood there a vision of the poor "Mafeking" dupes belonging to the working class rose up before me. Not only were they being heavily taxed to wage this abominable war on behalf of German-Jew mine-owners and other international interlopers, but the money so provided was being squandered in bribes and commissions, in buying bad mules, inferior horses, and worse food at outrageous prices, and in subsidising these well-got-up women I saw around me. And among those who were most eager for the war and most jubilant at the slightest success were the wage-earners themselves in the very poorest localities. The insanitary, pauper-inhabited court, then still standing at the end of the street I live in, was more decorated with flags at the news of some "victory" than were all the fashionable parts of Westminster put together. Patriots indeed!

One of the worst features of the whole campaign, too, was the position in which it placed us with respect to continental powers. Our unpleasant and dangerous relations with the German Empire date from that period. The antagonism between the two Empires would very likely have developed in any case out of commercial rivalry and Prussian aggressive militarism. But that might, on the other hand, have been conceivably avoided as a more sensible view of the situation gained

influence owing to Social-Democratic propaganda on both sides of the North Sea. Nobody nowadays, I judge, would dispute that, rash as the message may have been, the Kaiser—for whom, most assuredly, I have not the very slightest admiration or respect — was quite justified in declaring his sympathy with the Dutch Republics, as against the piratical policy of Great Britain.

He but expressed the universal opinion of all men of common sense and decent morality in Europe and America. That Germany should have been unable to lead civilised public opinion in a definite pronouncement against the Chamberlainite policy of brutality and arrogance, owing to the overwhelming superiority of the British fleet, gave German statesmen good reason for deciding that such a state of things should never arise again, quite independently of the teachings of Captain Mahan. And I say this, though I am and always have been in favour of an extremely powerful navy for this country, recognising as I do that this is essential to our national existence, to say nothing of our food-supply. Moreover, I have upheld that opinion against the most vehement attacks from my own side, and for the time being to the serious detriment of my personal influence. Pacifism and anti-nationalism find no champion in me. But our attack on the South African Boers was as impolitic and injurious as it was immoral and cowardly. The effect of our action was seen when Austria swept aside the conventions of the Treaty of Berlin by annexing Bosnia and the Herzegovina, when our ally Japan took unscrupulous possession of the kingdom of Korea, and when our dear friend Russia takes what action she pleases in Persia and Central Asia. Our chickens of 1899 and 1900 have come

to roost as vultures, and the end of it is not yet by any means. 1914-1917

Let us not forget also that France took the same view as Germany of our conduct. The steps which most turned French statesmen, French publicists, and the French people against us were the pouring of Indian troops into Natal while negotiations were going forward, thus forcing the Boer leaders to declare war, and then our parading that Declaration before the world as evidence that we were in the right. This was regarded by every Frenchman I met at that time as to the full as mean and contemptible as our whole proceedings had been high-handed. Not content with disregarding European public opinion in general, and French sentiment in particular, we went so far as to state, in nearly the whole of our press, that France was a decadent nation; that the French had lost all their high faculties; that thenceforward they were a factor which could be safely neglected in world policy. Nay, our journalists went so far as to implore their countrymen to boycott the International Exhibition in Paris—the finest Exhibition that ever was held, or probably ever will be held, under the capitalist régime.

As I had from early youth greatly admired French literature, French art, French culture, French vivacity, French initiative, French wit, French vigour, and I knew right well that these invaluable qualities were the salt of European civilisation, no matter what might be their accompanying defects, these attempts to represent France as played out and her people decadent made me furiously angry. They were malignant lies from end to end, and many of the men who uttered them and wrote them knew this quite well. As a persistent advocate, also, of a French alliance, and as one who bitterly regretted that the influence of our German Court

had prevented us from calling a halt to Germany after the disaster of Sedan, I feared that these gross misrepresentations and insults sent across the Channel to one of the proudest and not the least touchy of nations might render impossible a close understanding and friendship between the two countries. What is more, I believe it would have done so but for the action of the late King Edward VII. Whatever the defects of that monarch may have been, it will, to my mind, ever be counted to him for righteousness that, at the very height of this international misunderstanding, he lost no opportunity of manifesting his friendship and his love for France; that he took the risk of a very bad reception from the people of Paris and all that might have followed thereupon in order to show his sympathy for France; and that he never rested until he had greatly helped, by all the pressure he could exert as Prince and King, to bring about the happy *entente cordiale* now existing with the French Republic.

It is strange to recall to-day all that was said and done on the other side during that ugly period. I rejoice to remember that I did my little best to abate the ill-feeling, Some well-known Frenchmen, friends of mine, came to London just then. They declared that England was all against them. I told them it was nothing of the kind; that France was more popular here, in spite of all the abuse by the arm-chair fire-eaters of the capitalist press, than any other country. They laughed at me. "Well," I said, "you will admit that if chauvinism is likely to be rampant anywhere it is bound to show itself at a music hall." They agreed. "Come with me, then," I went on, "to the Alhambra to-night, if I can get seats, and see what happens when the tricolour flag is brought on the stage." They accepted my in-

vitation. I knew very well I risked nothing, for I was aware of what was occurring nightly. So they dined with me, and to the Alhambra we went. In the stage parade which was then on the bill, the flags of all nations were brought forward to the accompaniment of the national air of each country. Many of these flags were well received, but when the tricolour was waved to the strains of the Marseillaise, the whole audience burst out into enthusiastic cheering, and many of those present rose up in their places. "What do you think of that?" I asked. "Mais," replied one of them who spoke English as well as I did, "il me semble que votre journalisme ici est one big humbug."

And yet I ought not to speak contemptuously of English journalism, for at that very time the *Morning Post* printed two long letters from me, strongly protesting against the tone which was being adopted against France, and especially against the statements that she was decadent. I pointed out—this was twelve years ago—that, so far from being decadent, France still led the world in many departments of science and art; that a new life had been breathed into the people since the establishment of the Republic; that in spite of all scandal and all petty jealousies and class and religious hatreds, the feeling for the greatness, the glory, the dignity of France was growing all the time among her people; that the physical status of the population was steadily rising in every section; and that the young men of the new period, in town and country alike, were taking to those open-air games which their fathers had given up, and which we English had adopted and improved from France. Within forty-eight hours of the appearance of my second letter, cards from the editors of several of the great Paris

papers, as well as from many private friends, lay upon my table. Much more important, independent Tories backed up my representations, and declared against this policy of detraction which had been pursued up to that time. And when full account is taken of Major Marchand and the Fashoda incident, all this lamentable misunderstanding was due mainly to the South African War. Fortunate is it that the mutual distrust has been overcome, and that the two most civilised nations in Europe have now resolved to make common cause against militarist aggression.

But nothing will ever wipe away the memory of that war for those who lived through it. The downright cowardice so often displayed by our troops, the neglect of all warnings from men of experience, the horrors of the concentration camps, the sacrifice of valuable lives to as little purpose as the losses in the fatal Walcheren expedition,—all remain a record of blundering fatuity unsurpassed in our annals. Many of those who fell were as strongly against the war as I was. One case struck me as very sad. Upon going down to St. James's Park Station on the Underground one day, I saw a number of guardsmen of the reserve, some of whom I knew and spoke to, ranged up in line. Having chatted to those I was acquainted with while waiting for the train, and learned they were off, naturally not very eagerly, to South Africa to fight in a cause they strongly disliked, I turned round. Then the officer in charge addressed me by name. He was a man of title and wealth. "Why," I said in surprise, "I thought you were dead against the war and had left the army." As we were speaking we jumped into a carriage together. "I am as much against the war as ever I was, and I think Jameson and Willoughby ought to have been shot, but I am

obliged to go out now others are going." Poor fellow, he was shot through the head himself at Magersfontein. Thousands fell who held the same opinion as he did about the whole wretched business, and his life was of course no more valuable to the country than those of the men under his command.

My friend, Mr. George Cawston, who had as much to do with the Royal Chartered Company as anybody throughout its earlier stages, who possesses what I take to be quite an unequalled collection of documents and letters from all the leading personages in the business from Mr. Cecil Rhodes downwards, and who, to his honour be it said, opposed the whole shameful plot against the two Dutch Republics from the start, tells me the following of his own knowledge. The whole of the difficulties with President Kruger had been arranged by negotiation in the City, the final agreement having been come to at the Rothschilds' offices, and a despatch accepted by the entire Cabinet had been prepared and sent off. All danger of war had been averted, and things would have settled down peaceably. This did not suit Mr. Chamberlain at all. He went down to Birmingham, and delivered a speech full of menace to the Boers.

Thereupon President Kruger decided that Mr. Chamberlain was the person with whom he had to reckon, and never ceased to arm, or to negotiate for complete harmony of action between the Transvaal and the Orange Free State in defence of Boer independence, from then onwards. This confirms what Greenwood told me at the time as coming direct from the Cabinet, namely, that Mr. Chamberlain bullied the whole of them, and his threats to resign always ended in the surrender of the majority. Anything more cowardly and

disgraceful it is impossible to conceive. But the truth is they all thought that, even if it came to hostilities, it would be a nice easy little war, and success would wipe out all memory of unscrupulous or pusillanimous conduct. Not success but practical defeat achieved this. Even the Committee appointed to examine into all this wholesale political rascality burked the inquiry they were appointed to conduct, and the true history of this dirty business has still to be written.

And the middle and the end of the struggle were as bad as the beginning. Victory under such circumstances, and celebrated as it was, seemed even more humiliating than defeat. The display of hysterical and even maniacal joy and exuberance on Mafeking night in London surpassed in unseemly indecency anything I could have imagined. The whole manifestation spoke of a people in decay. Our fathers and grandfathers were infinitely less demonstrative, and, though not averse from strong liquor, far more sober in their rejoicings, when the news came of Trafalgar or Waterloo. It was nothing short of an orgy. I myself saw girls of respectable appearance, and ordinarily, no doubt, of modest demeanour, carrying on with men whom they did not know after a fashion that women of the loosest life would have hesitated to adopt. This, too, early in the day and in the open street.

As night came on matters grew worse, until it really did seem as if London had gone mad. Disaster, to be just, had been taken coolly, but even temporary success on a small scale was too exciting for these neurotic modern inhabitants of the great and ancient city which had welcomed the return of Fairfax's conquering citizen army with stern and calm enthusiasm, and had withstood Elizabeth and Cromwell at the height of their power. The rejoicings at the peace were, happily, nothing to this.

And what a peace! The full truth about it will probably never be known. The Boer side of the story has not yet been made public. Certain it is, that the English were much more eager for a settlement than the Dutch farmers, greatly as these latter had suffered. The efforts made to find the man who was known to possess the confidence of the most dashing of the Boer leaders, De Wet, and the eagerness displayed to pay such compensation as was demanded, showed to all who knew what was taking place how afraid were our rulers of the long, dragging, costly and dangerous guerilla warfare which would follow if the Dutch farmers, infuriated by the inhuman treatment of prisoners, men, women, and children alike, had sought refuge in their mountain fastnesses, already provisioned and ammunitioned for their reception. Happily peace was made; but our prestige as a fighting people had gone, and our character for uprightness and magnanimity had been irreparably destroyed. And the outcome of it all is that the Dutch are now obtaining an ascendancy in South Africa which they could never have attained under any other circumstances, and which they will keep until the native races understand that the future must be to them, and organise and educate themselves to secure it.[1]

[1] It should be borne in mind that the Kaffirs in the Rand Mines are being treated at this very moment after a similar fashion to that described by ancient writers as the fate of the miserable slaves in the mines of Laurium and Sicily. They are worked literally to death in a few short years. And this under a Liberal Government!

CHAPTER VIII

OF BUSINESS

Business is not supposed to be a very amusing occupation, but to anybody who can look upon things from the outside there is a good deal of quiet enjoyment to be got out of the ups and downs of finance and commerce. The imposing profundity of the City is at times exquisitely funny. It is scarcely too much to say that those who deal habitually with banking and money must be superficial. But nobody would believe it to look at them. Yet such superficiality is part of the stock-in-trade of a successful City man. If he saw more he would gain less. It is said, I believe, with truth, that, as a rule, a stockbroker who sees beyond the fortnightly settlement is a ruined man. That, of course, is an exaggeration, and there are stockbrokers, the late William Trotter of Capels, for one, who develop into capable financiers, and even permit themselves to reason about the current of events. But these are the exceptions. Bankers go up a step higher. But they, too, have the most ludicrous limitations, and not long ago Lord Avebury wrote to the *Times* to proclaim to the world as an incontestable truth that the interests of capital and labour are identical! So they are, from the point of view of Lombard Street, and all the bankers shall say "Amen." Sharks and flying-fish come in the same category. In the course of a very

long experience, however, I have only met two City men, and they had retired from active business, who really understood what was going on around them.

But in ordinary times this is only to say that bankers, bill-brokers, stockbrokers, stock-jobbers in the same way as merchants, shippers, shipowners, have no more necessity for knowing the basis of their business than a captain navigating a vessel is bound to be acquainted with the mathematical theory which underlies his logarithmic tables. He has his tables, he has his sextant, and rule of thumb does the rest for him. So with our City magnates, Semitic and Caucasian alike. They know the bank-rate, they know what bills are out, they can form a general idea of the aspect of foreign markets, and they can talk learnedly about the fluctuations of trade, the ups and downs of stocks, the necessity for caution, and a larger gold reserve; but of why there should be crises, what are the causes of "bad times" they are ignorant. It is enough for them that they take their little craft along on the old lines, and reef down early when the financial outlook forbodes a tornado.

I once wrote a book on the *Commercial Crises of the Nineteenth Century*, and the more carefully I studied the behaviour of "first-rate men of business," in periods of real stress and strain, the more absurd it appeared to me. The City in a panic is even more silly than a crowd of hysterical suffragettes in a window-breaking fit. Any one who listened to the talk on the street, not to say in the solemn security of the bank parlour, would believe that the bottom was falling out of the universe of trade, for the time being at any rate, because gold had ceased to be a measure of value, a basis of credit, etc., and actually was demanded as a means of payment. The same thing occurs over and over again in ricketty markets like those of London or New York, and nobody seems to

learn anything by the successive shocks. They are content, however, that in finance they come less often than they used to come. That is all.

If also you were to tell these manipulators of money, exchange, bills, and the like, that they were of small account to mankind, and that the world could get on very well without them, they would consider you fit for a lunatic asylum, which from their point of view you would be. My old friend Butler Johnstone, whose career was so sad an example of Carlyle's phrase "character is destiny," was once travelling up to the City from Brighton with some very important City folk. There was a heavy fog on the line, and the train became more and more behind its time. The plutocrats began to fidget. "This is a very serious thing indeed," said one of them; "I shall miss several most important appointments." "I really don't know what to do," said another; "I have a meeting at my office to make the final arrangements for that big issue of ours on Monday, and delay now might imperil everything. The worst of it is, there is no way of getting into touch with my partners." Every man in the car had something similar to say.

"Has it occurred to you, gentlemen," said Butler Johnstone in his sweetest voice, "that it would make very little difference to anybody if none of you ever arrived at all?" The idea had never presented itself to them, and two of them took the suggestion as a downright insult. But of all the useless encumbrancers of our anarchical society, I agree with Butler Johnstone, the day-to-day financier is the most useless. The old merchant-adventurer, and banker of the Gresham type, had something fine about him, though he, like his modern successor, promoted brigandage quite as much as he advanced commerce. But it would be difficult to find much to admire in the modern speculator, whose one

ambition is to tumble his shares in any enterprise he may enter into upon "the general public" as quickly as may be. English banks vigorously aid this stock gamble. They do not help actual development either at home or abroad. They make their vast profits chiefly by advances upon bills and shares, thus fostering the less sound side of modern finance and increasing the natural tendency to get rich in a hurry. Not long ago one of the most important London banks lent its entire stock of gold to a great American speculator, and very nearly went bankrupt, in consequence, when the pinch came, good as the security was upon which the hypothecation was made. The majority of people are quite unaware that the actual gold "reserve" upon which we operate our financial and banking business is only 4 per cent of the total mass of superincumbent credit. Whenever things are really tight, the Bank of England has to go to Paris for relief, and the chief national security is now below 75.

I have watched the vagaries of business men in many parts of the world, and I could easily write a book upon the chances and changes of financial life, not the least interesting part of which would be the wonderful adventures of the millionaires of San Francisco during and after the great "boom" of the mines on the Comstock Lode. But some of the quite minor events made an equal impression on my mind.

When the New Zealand diggings were in the high tide of success, and men who were lucky could make a small fortune within a comparatively short time, by washing gold out of the alluvial gold-bearing gravel, there came into being an organised gang of men who would go from one field to another and appropriate likely-looking claims that were being profitably worked by others. These

marauders being chiefly Irishmen, they were called Tipperary Boys or shortly "Tips." The goldfields were at that time under the autocratic control of Crown Commissioners who, although they had no immediately available force at their command to enforce their decisions, were as a rule implicitly obeyed. With the "Tips," however, difficulties frequently arose. They refused to abide by the rulings of the Crown Commissioners, or evaded them in some way, and became the terror of the country.

It so chanced that in one district four industrious, sober Germans were making excellent wages at a claim of their own when the "Tips" came along, saw that the prospects were very favourable, and ordered the Germans out. As the "Tips" were numerous and armed, the Germans were obliged to give way, abandoned their claim, and went off for the time being elsewhere. One of them, however, took a trip down to the Crown Commissioner and told him what had happened. That functionary at once rode up to the claim and peremptorily ordered the "Tips" to clear out themselves. They did so, and the Germans were reinstalled before the Crown Commissioner left. No sooner was his back turned than the "Tips" again ousted the Germans and took possession, with many threats of what would befall the Teutons if they complained again. The latter, nevertheless, applied afresh to the Crown Commissioner, who told them plainly he could not possibly maintain them in their claim now, but he would take care they were rightly dealt with in the long run, and advised them in the meantime to work another claim. This they did.

Months rolled on and the whole force of the "Tips" was concentrated on the claim of the ill-used Germans, which proved to be much richer than could have been anticipated. In those days all gold won was sent down at intervals to bank by

escort, and was credited in the books to the claim whence it came, stores, etc., necessary for the miners being sent up to camp and charged against the balance. After more than a year had gone by and the claim had been practically worked out, the "Tips" all returned to Dunedin to divide up the very large amount of gold they had remitted, and to have a good time together. They then found that every pennyweight of gold they had extracted from the claim, less the bare cost of their living, had been credited by express order of the Crown Commissioner to the four Germans whom they had dispossessed!

A more terrible case of revenge by a private individual occurred at the same time. He was a very successful prospector, and had discovered more than one rich gold deposit. As such men generally are, he was careless and free-handed, and consequently was frequently taken advantage of. But his last find had been exceptionally rich, and he had been undoubtedly cheated out of his fair share by the wealthy men who had been associated with him in his new claims. This he might have put up with under ordinary circumstances. Having now a wife and children, that changed his view of matters. He disappeared for some weeks. On his return it became known that he had been quite amazingly successful, and that a goldfield of unprecedented wealth had rewarded his search in the bush. Those who had previously benefited by his work soon heard of this and were anxious, of course, to be interested. He insisted this time that each should give him something substantial on account; and that only those who would engage themselves formally beforehand to put up considerable amounts for working capital should accompany the expedition. There was quite a rush of well-to-do speculators to share in the venture and go with the lucky

prospector. Everything seemed quite sound and in good faith.

The expedition started, making for a district previously almost unexplored. Though the party was well equipped, and all were accustomed to rough travelling, it was most trying work. At last, when the whole party was thoroughly bushed, the prospector himself disappeared. It was found out afterwards he had made his way to another port on the coast, where he met his wife and children and shipped for America. His unfortunate victims straggled back to their base; but having relied entirely upon their guide, they underwent great hardships, from which some of them died. Nothing was ever heard of the vengeful prospector in New Zealand.

And the ups and downs of mining ventures are very strange. All the gamblings of Monte Carlo or other resorts of the wealthy punter are trifling as compared with what actually occurs in real life. This I say with confidence, though I myself was once present as a lad at the rouge-et-noir table at Wiesbaden, when a most extraordinary change of luck took place. The famous Spanish or Cuban gambler Garcia had been playing for some time against a run of abominably bad luck. He even appeared to be cleaned right out, and at any rate sent the lady who was with him for more funds. Then backing red for one coup to the utmost stake allowed, he followed up his luck and actually had a run of nineteen on the red in succession, always staking the full amount. He broke the bank of course; but as he had been playing very heavily they started afresh, and I saw the run completed. It was attended by a very amusing incident. As Garcia raked in rouleau after rouleau of gold wrapped up in nice white paper, he handed them all over to the lady spoken of, who in turn deposited them

in a large bag she had with her. At last the weight of the accumulation of winnings became so great that the handle of the bag broke and all the rouleaux tumbled out upon the floor. Some of them broke asunder and scattered the coins about. A rush was made by the attendants, who picked up the money, and I don't think Garcia lost any of it. If he did he said nothing about it. What became of Garcia afterwards I never heard. But it was reported that he was mixed up later in a tremendous gambling scandal in the Havana. The gambling tables at Wiesbaden have, of course, been closed for many years.

But, as I say, all that I have ever seen or heard of as happening at gaming tables, and I have myself witnessed some very queer occurrences at Faro out West, do not equal the astonishing ups and downs of business. Here is one of them which I saw much too close to be pleasant. I had become intimate, through my friend Butler Johnstone, with a large and successful firm of stockbrokers and financiers in the City. The business had been built up by a retired colonel whose character for great uprightness and shrewdness combined had secured for him a most enviable connection from which he and his successors derived a large income. Mr. Montmorency, the head of the firm at the time I speak of, was regarded as a capable successor of his uncle, and had fully maintained the position to which he had succeeded, extending largely the scope of its affairs. What that position was may be gathered from the following facts. I was negotiating on behalf of my friend Mr. Montmorency and his firm through another very old friend of mine, the late Mr. W. A. Stevens of New York, for the purchase of one-half of the great Ontario Mine of Utah, which belonged then to Messrs. Haggin & Tevis (proprietors of Messrs. Wells,

Fargo & Co., the well-known transport agents and bankers). It was a very large business indeed of its kind, in the days before the South African mining development had dwarfed everything else of a mining character on the London market. The whole transaction seemed to be a good, sound, and favourable one, as the mine itself was returning large dividends, and I believe does so still, more than thirty years later. The intention was to have active dealings in the shares at a fair premium, both in London and New York.

So it happened that one day as we walked down Old Broad Street, Stevens said: "This is such a very important business that though of course I know all about you, Hyndman, and I have every reason to believe your friends are all right, if you don't mind I will just run in here—22 Old Broad Street, it was—and ask my old friend Junius Morgan about them. Come in with me." In we went, and Mr. Stevens was very shortly ushered into the presence of the head of the house of J. S. Morgan & Co., who received him very cordially and asked what he could do for a man with whom he was evidently on very intimate terms. "The fact is, Morgan," said Stevens, "I have got a very important transaction with some friends of Mr. Hyndman's to purchase half the Ontario Mine, in which I have an interest, from Haggin & Tevis, and I have looked in to ask you, in Mr. Hyndman's presence, what you know about them." "As it happens," answered the old gentleman, "I know a great deal about them, and I don't mind telling you as an old friend that when last I went over to the other side, the matter of the Cairo and Vincennes Railway being in a very ticklish condition, I entrusted the management of this end of that business to the head of the firm you name. I think that ought to be enough for you."

It was quite enough, and after a few friendly words, Mr. Morgan asking Stevens where he was staying and so on, we went on. Of course nothing could have been more satisfactory, as Mr. Junius Morgan deservedly had the credit of being one of the most cautious, able, and successful financiers in the world at that time. Stevens expressed his pleasure and we parted. But that was not the end of it. My wife and I dined with Mr. and Mrs. Stevens that evening at Brown's Hotel in Albemarle Street. In the middle of dinner a messenger was announced who insisted upon delivering his communication to Mr. Stevens himself, though no answer was required. He was shown in, delivered the letter, and went. Stevens opened it, read it, and handed it to me without a word. It was from Junius Morgan himself, was marked "personal," and after reference to some private matters it more than confirmed what he had said about Montmorency & Co. earlier in the day. "That is extremely kind of Morgan," said Stevens, "and I should think it must be very gratifying to you." Within eighteen months that firm, in which a man like Junius Morgan had such complete confidence, failed for £300,000.

It was quite a dramatic collapse and contained some very exciting incidents. Among them was this: My friend's firm was acting at the time as brokers for the Lyons Branch of the "Union Générale." This was the great Catholic Bank set on foot by M. Bontoux, with the help of M. Jean Féder and others, in order to make head against the still greater Jew bankers and their connections. At first the combination was very successful, and one of the principal Jews in Paris, who had thought proper to "bear" all M. Bontoux's securities, was caught in the rise, and, being unable to meet his engagements, he adopted

the Chinese remedy against insolvency and committed suicide. Catholic up: Jew down.

But this was only the first round in the financial "fight to a finish." The Jews were determined to have their revenge. Bontoux's own incredible imprudence gave it them; for I have never been able to see why the French Catholic community, which is immensely rich, far richer than probably all the other religionists in Europe put together, should not have been able to hold its own in legitimate financial and investment business against all the Jews and their descendants who ever came out of Palestine. By a curious accident I got later the most correct information possible as to what was in contemplation on the Hebrew side. Some years before I had been able to save a very powerful Parisian Jew from serious unpleasantness, in a matter quite outside of finance, and had got to know him pretty well in consequence. He was always trying to show me in some way he had not forgotten this. He thought now he had an opportunity of doing me a great service. My wife and I had been staying in Paris in company with some friends just at the period when the struggle between the Union Générale and the Jews and their allies was at its height.

I was called back to London on important business and came over, leaving my wife with our friends at the Hôtel Continental with the full intention of returning to Paris in three or four days. On the second day, to my astonishment, I got a telegram at home from my wife in the morning, telling me to meet her at Charing Cross Station by the mail arriving at 7 o'clock. I was astonished at the telegram, and still more surprised when I heard the reason of this sudden change of plan. I soon learnt. It appeared that that morning my Jew friend, who thought I was still in Paris,

had called at the hotel on very particular business, which, when he learnt I was absent, he would only communicate in private to my wife, and having done so begged her to leave at once for London, as the information he had given her could only be passed on safely by word of mouth. What he said was that the Jew combination had finally decided to break the Union Générale at the next Wednesday monthly settlement, and that all arrangements were made to that end. "I know," he added, "that Mr. Hyndman never speculates in shares himself, but those with whom he is associated do, and they are engaged in operating for one of M. Bontoux's branches at the present time. They will know what I tell you can be absolutely relied upon when Mr. Hyndman gives my name, which he is perfectly at liberty to do."

This my wife told me as we went home from the station, and after dinner we drove down to Rutland Gate, found my friend, and I told him the news. Although he admitted the banker was not at all likely to be mistaken, and was still less likely to deceive me, when the great rush came his firm, instead of having won a large sum of money, actually lost by neglecting to act on this very early and absolutely correct information. When I told my Paris friend what had occurred, all he said was, "The man is mad; draw clear of him as soon as you can." And mad he undoubtedly was.

This was made apparent very shortly afterwards when he began to plunge here, there, and everywhere in all sorts of wild schemes, and thus brought himself and his firm completely to grief. Then he forged under circumstances which made discovery sooner or later practically certain. Last of all, he somehow got himself arrested in the country, just before his forgeries were found out,

on a matter of £800. Sir George Lewis, who was a very close friend of his, went down, paid the money, and hustled him off full speed to port with the words, "There is only one safe country for you—Mexico." Thither he went.

But that is not the end of the story either. Mr. Montmorency had a very attractive wife, previously divorced on her own motion from an old Trinity friend of mine, who had succeeded to a peerage. With her husband Mr. Montmorency finally expatriated to the realm of Diaz, and herself reduced to practical widowhood in London, this lady's position with three or four children left a good deal to desire. Circumstances became still more trying when a man of good family and standing was anxious to marry her, not being aware of the fact that husband number two was still living. What was to be done? Nobody knew where Montmorency had gone, beyond that he had sought privacy and oblivion in one of the Spanish American States which had no Extradition Treaty with Great Britain. Then it became known that he had chosen Mexico as his place of retirement, or Mexico had chosen him. But Mexico is a large country, less well known in the early eighties than it is to-day.

Then came the unexpected, or deliberate and well-contrived, discovery. A well-known Englishman was riding towards one of the rich but out-of-the-way mining camps with which Mexico abounds, when he came across another traveller riding in the same direction. The newcomer entered into conversation with his chance companion, became more or less friendly with him, and learned that after a series of adventures, scarcely agreeable to a man who had been living a most luxurious life at home, he was now foreman of one of the mines in the camp towards which they were bound.

Further intercourse made them more friendly still, and certain questions asked by this chance acquaintance led the Englishman to believe the person with whom he was talking was himself a fellow-countryman, well acquainted with the world and pretty deeply versed in finance. On his return he heard of the search being made for Mr. Montmorency, and came to the conclusion that the man he had met in Mexico was that person. But this brought the much-married and disconsolate spouse no nearer to her third nuptials than before, inasmuch that, married to Montmorency as she undoubtedly was, his wife she still must be, and nothing but death or divorce could unmake they twain from being one flesh.

Divorce, which Montmorency might agree to, was thought to be preferable to suggesting suicide, which would not be so calmly viewed on the other side. But according to the account of the returned traveller the way to divorce had not been made plain for the deserted dame. There was no woman on the foreman's premises, nor any of that sex with whom he was at all likely to cohabit within hail. But this was quite a minor difficulty to overcome, and overcome it was. A Commission was sent out; it was discovered and sworn to that the illustrious levanter was living in open profligacy with an attractive negress; proceedings for divorce were forthwith instituted, a substantial sum found a receiver in Mexico, and Mrs. Montmorency ere long figured forth before the world as—but what am I about to say? I came face to face with the lady years afterwards in a London drawing-room. There was no anxiety to renew the acquaintance on either side.

But when one begins to write about things of this sort it is difficult to know where to stop. Thus the reference to Mexico suggests to my

mind the rich San Gertrudis Silver Mine. My old friend Alfred Renshaw, the solicitor, had a good deal to do with Mexico. One day he was offered three "bars," or one-eighth of the twenty-four "bars" into which Mexican mines owned on the spot are divided, for a few thousand pounds. Renshaw was quite able to command that sum, but he had been unlucky in mining and declined. Thereupon his friend and companion, one Gould, asked him if he had any objection to Gould himself making the purchase. Renshaw said certainly not. Gould completed the deal, and Renshaw told me it had returned his friend annually several times the sum he paid for the purchase.

I had more than one experience myself on the other side. But as showing how easy it is to be mistaken even with the best advice, and after taking every precaution, the two following incidents suffice. I was interested with the man above referred to in the Broadway Mine. The mine was examined and reported upon by Mr. Plummer, the best expert of the great firm of Messrs. John Taylor & Sons. He sent home a perfectly honest and most satisfactory report. The shares went to a high premium, but I would not sell. Suddenly we learned that the lode had pinched quite out, and the shares were unsaleable. The mine was very foolishly given up without further proper exploration, and certainly Plummer had made a mistake. But others had more confidence, the vein was rediscovered, and people on the spot made a great and permanent success of it.

But I shall never forget the Miner's Dream. That was in Western Australia. Everybody believed the Dream would materialise into wealth beyond the dreams even of a miner. Reports excellent, assays most encouraging, vein traced the full length of the claims. I had quite a

large block of shares. I actually went into Court to prevent the fulfilment of an agreement by which I was obliged, as it was contended, to sell them at par, which I was forced to do. All the clever men in the venture were of the same mind as myself. Six months later the shares were not worth threepence a piece.

So it goes. And then Garcia's run of nineteen on the red has its parallel on the other side in practical every-day matters. Those who say there is no luck in affairs know nothing about life. There was my friend the late Colonel Church, for example, the American engineer and contractor, as able and thorough and persistent a man in his business as ever was. After he lost his case in regard to the Bolivia Railway Loan in 1871, he could not do anything right for some fifteen years. That case alone was a remarkable instance of bad luck or worse. The late Lord Justice Cotton was one of Church's counsel in the first trial, which Church won. He was raised to the Bench, and the cause came before him for trial on appeal. Church won again, Cotton being one of the majority of judges in his favour. There was a further appeal to the House of Lords, and by the time the trial came on Cotton was a Law Lord.

It seems incredible, but it is the fact that Church lost on this final hearing by the voice of one judge, and that judge was Cotton! One of the counsel opposed to Church, who had been in the case throughout, and knew the whole of it from end to end in every detail, as perhaps nobody else did except Church himself, told me that he was confident there had been a very gross miscarriage of justice, and that Cotton's decision was quite inexplicable to everybody who was behind the scenes. Church had, as he phrased it, "fought the case down to the nails in his office carpet," and it

ruined him for the time being. More serious in its ultimate result from the capitalist point of view, Church's great scheme for opening up the head waters of the Amazon by rail, connecting with steamers below the great rapids, was not carried out, and the development of Bolivia was thrown back more than forty years.

Well, after the loss of this case, Church, as I say, could do nothing right. Either there was a revolution, or a plague, or an earthquake to put a stop to his plans, and with all his ability and assiduity he began to be reckoned an unlucky man. One of the failures was quite extraordinary. Church had obtained from the Emperor of Brazil and his Government a railway concession which it would have taken £8,000,000 to finance. The bonds were guaranteed, and Church had placed half of them in London, with the assurance that the remaining £4,000,000 would be taken in Paris. Just when everything had been arranged, the revolution broke out in Brazil, Don Pedro was deported, and the Republic did not renew the concession, which would have been a success in a few weeks more when the final contracts were passed. Something similar, though not on quite so large a scale, occurred owing to a revolution breaking out in another South American State. So it went on, until, for no obvious reason, the tide turned, and Church died a fairly wealthy man. One thing he said which sticks in my memory. He had taken a prolonged tour through Asia Minor, visiting nearly all the places of interest. On his return we dined with him at his flat in Cromwell Road, and I asked him what struck him most in all his wanderings. "*Imperator Hadrianus fecit*," he replied. Church was a really good geographer, and the only foreigner, I believe, who was ever on the Council of the Royal Geographical Society.

One other recollection of bad luck. A friend who had had a long period of dull times in his business sold a property to great advantage to himself, but still cheap to the buyer, a Mr. M'Ilwraith, for £60,000. Everything was agreed, and the parties met at the offices of the buyers' solicitors to complete the transaction. The deeds were all ready, the first cheque drawn, and no difficulty whatever could have arisen, when Mr. M'Ilwraith seated himself at the table to sign the documents. He had just taken up the pen when he fell forward dead, and the whole transaction fell dead with him.

My earliest lessons in finance, in which, for various reasons, I have personally never been very successful, were learnt from Samuel Laing, who was Finance Minister of India and Chairman of the London and Brighton Railway, also one of the most successful popularisers of scientific discovery of his time, as in *Human Origins*, etc. His eldest son was an intimate of mine at Trinity, and the year after I had taken my degree he suggested that we should go together to Paris, as his father had important business there, and we might have a good time, while Samuel Laing senior devoted himself to finance. I have always been ready to go to Paris since I was sixteen, and I am now almost equally ready to travel thither at seventy, so I fell in readily with the suggestion, and we started in company, all staying at the same hotel. This was in 1865, just when the Crédit Lyonnais was established, and financial affairs in Paris were on a very different footing from that on which they stand to-day.

Sammy Laing and myself enjoyed ourselves immensely, and as I knew the city and its surroundings pretty well even then, having first made its acquaintance in 1858, and had kept it up, we

had an exceptionally good time. But I became interested in Mr. Laing's financial business too. This had to do with the Ottoman Loan, which he then had in hand, and of which he was arranging a large portion in Paris. The details have now no interest, but when the negotiations were taking the shape of a definite contract I wished to be present at the finish. This was agreed to, and Sammy and I assisted at the deliberations. At last all was settled as to the terms, date, and amount of the French subscriptions, and the documents drawn, with notaries present, only awaiting signature by the representatives of the various groups. "You will now sign, gentlemen," said Mr. Laing. "Monsieur ——" — I have forgotten the man's name—" will sign on behalf of all of us," said the most important personage of the contracting groups. "Certainly," was Laing's reply, "if all you gentlemen will put your initials after him on the part of your respective institutions."

At this these reverend, grave, and potent signors of finance drew back, saying that was not the arrangement they had made. "In that case," was Mr. Laing's rejoinder, "I am afraid the business must await completion until you have obtained the necessary authority." Out they all trooped from the sitting-room of our hotel, and when they had gone I turned to Mr. Laing and asked him why he would not accept the signature of the gentleman whom the other bankers had put forward. "Well, you see, he is a rich man, and I am quite ready to believe an honourable man, and, if everything went even fairly right, I am disposed to think that he and the rest of them would act up to their bargain; but we are dealing with millions sterling, and should there chance to be a failure to subscribe on the part of the public, Monsieur So-and-so might possibly be travelling for health or pleasure

in the less accessible parts of South America. So I preferred to get them each and all formally bound. They will all sign. This is only a little play." But we had another full week in Paris before the matter was properly settled, and then we all left.

I do not think I should have recalled this but for the remarkable sequel. I was at breakfast in my rooms at 25 Bury Street, St. James's, when one morning young Samuel Laing rushed in, evidently much upset. The first words he said were, "Things look like going very badly with the Ottoman Loan, and I have had an awful shock." I took no personal interest at the time in financial matters, and had not noticed whether the markets were up or down. "What is the matter?" I asked. "Coming up from Brighton this morning, only half an hour ago, my father tried to throw himself out of the carriage as we came through the Merstham Tunnel." "You ought not to have told that even to me," I said. "If it were repeated in the City, or even hinted at, that would settle the business." I refused to talk of the matter any more, and after Sammy had sat long enough to recover himself, I persuaded him to go to his Clubs looking particularly jubilant. Whether this incident with his father really occurred, or whether my friend, wrought up by anxiety, only imagined it, I have never been able to decide; but certainly Samuel Laing *père* was about the very last man I should have thought likely to commit suicide on any account. Any way, things took a turn for the better, and Mr. Laing made a personal profit of £179,000 that year, as I had an opportunity of knowing. He lived to nearly ninety, and kept his intellectual vigour to the last.

Among other persons who interested me in the City were Hume Webster and Baron Grant.

Ordinary, respectable city men, who go through life in the odour of sanctity and of a big balance at the bank, are not interesting at all, or, if they are, develop their attractions outside their money-getting avocations. But the adventurer, the man who starts at the bottom, and by hook or by crook gets himself up to the top, or nearly so, and then tumbles down to the bottom, or nearly so, is quite a pleasant study. Of course there are adventurers who always adventure prudently, or are believed to have done so when they succeed. They are like a man who really should possess a winning martingale for Monte Carlo. They have reduced legal conveyance to their own use to such a certainty that winning ceases to be a matter of chance at all. Beginning as office boys, they go over to the majority as millionaires; having become Members of Parliament, Privy Councillors, Baronets, and Peers, as well as Chairmen of Banks, Insurance Offices, and great Combines in the meantime. I have met many such people, and I have found them a very wearyful folk. Samuel Laings are quite the exception among them.

But the two I name above were worthy of study. The second was quite the type of the up-and-down promoter of the same kind as Whitaker Wright and Hooley: men who are courted when successful and denounced as rogues when they fail. Quite a poor lad of Jewish origin when he came to London, he became a person of considerable importance for a time. I knew him at the height of his fame and after his collapse. When I first met him he had just acquired, beautified and presented to the citizens of London, at a cost of £30,000, Leicester Square. Those who, like myself, remember what Leicester Square was after the hideous "Globe" had been removed, and what a Golgotha in the very centre of London it became, will certainly, even now, have

some feeling of gratitude towards the get-rich-quick Baron.

It was the best piece of public service performed for London by an individual rich man in my day. I only wish a few of the disreputable millionaires who have dumped themselves upon us from South Africa had a little of Grant's readiness to expend some portion of their gains in removing a few of the eyesores still too common in our metropolis. Grant struck me as a brilliantly superficial but by no means as a thorough or a tenacious man of finance — at the inception of a business full of bright receptivity and optimistic zeal, and this lasted to the end if the venture went through with a run; but should serious difficulties arise, he showed himself by no means so capable.

Yet there was a time when Baron Grant was regarded as a really potent City magnate, and when he could certainly have realised upwards of a million sterling in hard cash. Moving into Lombard Street, and starting a bank without any deposit connection, building a magnificent edifice at Kensington, the late Sir James Knowles being its architect, with the finest staircase in London, and no bedroom accommodation for servants, Grant had persuaded himself that he would dominate the City himself, and hand on to his successors an imperishable name as the greatest financier of the nineteenth century. These grandiose aspirations he made no secret of, and so confident was he that when the one man whom he trusted gave him a hint that he had better secure his present position and wait a little, he threatened to break his head, as he was at the moment breaking a lump of coal with the poker. Shortly afterwards the collapse came. He became a man of comparatively small account, and as he had been treacherous even to his friends, nobody regretted either his downfall or his death.

Hume Webster never achieved the temporary eminence of Grant, though he was an abler man. I only mention him because he was also smitten in his way with that mania for grandeur, as the French call it, which afflicts so many others. He would probably have succeeded, if he had not had political ambitions, in addition to an expensive wife and an extensive stud farm. But Webster was a relative of the well-known Radical economist Joseph Hume, and he was so confident that the political mantle of this parsimonious Scotchman had fallen upon his shoulders that the House of Commons possessed what proved to be for him a fatal fascination. I knew Webster pretty well, and in the only transaction I ever had with him, a sound and a profitable one, he behaved quite straightforwardly throughout.

When, therefore, he told me he had made up his mind to contest South-west Ham, the seat afterwards won by Keir Hardie and now held by Will Thorne, I told him I thought he had better look elsewhere, as the Labour people might probably take the constituency themselves. If, however, he was determined to go forward, there were two courses open to him: the first, to spend very little money, but to have a thoroughgoing social programme, and stick to it; the second, to spend any amount of money, and just buy the seat by the expenditure of cash and the acquisition of personal popularity. He chose the latter course, and it finished him, not he it. His hand was always in his pocket for ready money, and there were plenty of earnest supporters eager to relieve him of it; he was also constantly obliged to go down and speak and confer, and waste time as well as money.

As a consequence, he deprived himself alike of the "immediate money" needed in his business, and of the freshness and vigour of mind that was even

more indispensable. Thousands of pounds were spent to no good purpose for himself or anybody else. I saw and heard how things were going, and urged him seriously to give the thing up. It was of no use, I told him, to fight in this way, and he was being betrayed by the very men he was paying and trusting. Besides, the people saw that he only wanted to put "M.P." after his name for financial purposes, and, for once, this unwholesome aspiration did not commend itself to the electors, even with fat cheques to back it. Now too his affairs began to get into a mess, he took to forgery as a last resource, and wound up by suicide at Marden Park, his breeding establishment.

What I have never been able to understand is why the Barings should not have been allowed to go the way of Grant and Webster, of Whitaker Wright, Hooley, Balfour, and Co. They had been just as foolish, if possibly more honest, than this collapsing quartette, but had not the Bank of England rushed to their assistance the bankruptcy of Messrs. Barings would have been as sensational a breakdown as the world of finance has ever witnessed. The head of the house, Lord Revelstoke, completely lost his head, and under the benign influence of a peripatetic Yankee drug-seller who had made his pile, plunged in Argentine issues like a raw youth gambling for the first time at Monte Carlo. All the shrewd men in the City knew the crash was coming, but most of them, with that strange sort of self-deception which prevails at such periods of premonitory panic, shut their eyes to the signs of the times. I have commented at some length on the whole affair in my *Commercial Crises.*

Each smart punter thought he would hang on as long as possible and still be able to get out in good time. The cleverer had advised their corre-

spondents in Buenos Aires not to take any more of the Barings' bills months before. Some others had reefed down carefully to make ready for the approaching storm. But the great majority of business men still hoped trouble would be averted.

The catastrophe, however, came soon enough, and it was quite interesting and even amusing, though entirely by my own fault I was one of the sufferers, to watch the hopeless imbecility and headlong hurry-scurry of the great City men. I saw it all very close. Not only was I myself a shareholder in an important Buenos Aires Tramway, but my friend Colonel Church had himself issued shortly before the bonds of the Villa Maria and Rufino Railway, which, brought out by the Murrietas, had been subscribed eleven times over. The Barings fostered all the wild and dangerous speculation to the full extent of what was possible, made out of the scramble while it lasted huge profits, and were more to blame than anybody else for the final smash. The Murrietas, who also came to grief at this juncture, were certainly less responsible for the downfall than their rivals, and were really better people in every way. But to allow the house of Baring to founder was actually thought, by some singular process of reasoning, to be a national disgrace, and their complete ruin would be followed, so certain wiseacres argued who had objects of their own to serve, by a collapse of the whole system of English credit and finance, and would transfer the centre of the world's business to some foreign capital.

Crocodile tears of the most acrid description were shed in waterfalls at the supposed imminence of such a calamity. The Government, the Directors of the Bank of England, and the leaders of the City, all with one accord resolved to save incompetence from its due reward, and to put a premium

on high-placed imbecility. Mr. Lidderdale, the Governor of the Bank, was belauded as a hero for his services at other people's expense, and was joined unto the Privy Council of this Realm by reason of his far-sighted support of financial rottenness.

When, as a humble student of finance and economics of quite another school, I poked fun at all this false and fatuous bolstering up of financial and intellectual weakness, and predicted that the geniuses of the City would have a Pelion upon Ossa of worthless paper hanging upon all the markets for years, as the result of this silly business—which, as a matter of fact, is precisely what befell—I was told not only that I was ignorant of practical affairs, but a few other things that might be expected to occur to angry men who had a very shrewd suspicion that I was right, at the bottom of their minds, all the time. The Baring crisis is now generally referred to as the worst example of how not to deal with bankruptcy in high finance.

There are two things to be noted in English upper-class life during the past twenty years: the growth of the influence of Catholics in "society," and the increase of the domination of German Jews in finance. When I first knew the City, Englishmen could and did still hold their own in nearly all departments. Now the prominence of the foreigner, and especially of the Israelite, is very marked. Why is this? I don't believe the Jew is the universal genius which his press makes him out to be. Personally, I am not at all afraid to meet him at anything, and I am only a fair specimen of my educated countrymen. What, then, is lacking? I tell a little story of what occurred not many years ago to myself which will, perhaps, explain it in part.

After one of my pleasing failures at Burnley, three important City men, two of whom are since dead, called to see me and wanted me to take control of a powerful syndicate they were starting. The terms offered were very good; the argument adduced, that, by this time, I must have had enough of honest and independent politics, was in the ordinary way of the world conclusive; the stipulation that I should withdraw from vehement exposition of Socialism was only reasonable, regard being had to what I was undertaking, and so on. I said quite plainly that I did not think it was possible for me to give up the work of my life, much as I felt flattered by their proposal, and foolish as such refusal might be to them; but that it seemed to me there were plenty of much younger Englishmen than myself who would jump at this chance of associating themselves intimately with such a powerful group. "That," said the oldest of the three, "is just precisely what there are not, or we should not be here." "What is the difficulty?" I asked. "We want a man of good financial experience; we want an Englishman whom we can trust as one of ourselves; we want somebody who can speak and read the languages, who won't take interminable week-ends, and who will refuse all outside commissions." I could not enter into the agreement, on account of the political stipulation, but my friends did not get the sort of Englishman they were on the look-out for.

Golfing and week-ends have a lot to answer for.

CHAPTER IX

BERNARD SHAW AND THE FABIAN SOCIETY

Exactly the date when I first met Bernard Shaw —the George prefix has long since disappeared— I cannot determine. But I know that at that time he was as yet quite unappreciated by the public, though his opinion of himself, and for that small blame to him, was even more exalted than it is to-day. "Every man has a right to be conceited until he has been successful." It is possible that Shaw has carried on his self-idolatry, if I am to judge by the Henderson biography, beyond the canonical limit. If so, it does not matter: if not, who cares? I remember very well, however, that, quite early in our acquaintance, I came to the conclusion—this was in the early eighties, bear in mind, before even "Corno di Bassetto" had sounded its shrill personal trump in the *Star*—that Shaw possessed a great literary faculty. Not only did I perceive this, but with my usual imprudence I boldly proclaimed it aloud. Nay, I went so far as to declare, after I had read his *Unsocial Socialist* and *Cashel Byron's Profession*, with his contributions to *Justice* and *To-day*, that he had many of the qualities of a Heine! How I was chaffed and laughed at by Shaw's particular friends for saying this. Yet now, nearly thirty years later, I suppose nobody would challenge the correctness of that estimate.

I did not say, observe, that Shaw possesses all the qualities of Heine; for he has neither the pathos nor the poetry which distinguish the great German writer. But he undoubtedly exhibits that brilliant satirist's strange power of turning to you, without effort, the seamy side of any subject which he has been dealing with just before from a more pleasing point of view; and it is quite certain that Heine himself never displayed that combined power of dramatic satire and epigrammatic sarcasm on the society of the day which has rendered Shaw one of the most effective dissolvent influences of our epoch. At the period I speak of, Shaw was not understood or accepted for what he undoubtedly was. And as, to his credit be it said, nothing would induce him to write below the high literary level which he had set up for himself, he was hard put to it to make both ends meet. Even when he had obtained an outlet and was writing for journals that were said to pay their contributors well, this determination of Shaw's never to be contented with anything lower than the best he could do, rendered this sort of work by no means a lucrative occupation for him.

I thought if there was one man in London who would understand Shaw and would see the value of his writing it would be Frederick Greenwood. I gave Shaw, therefore, a letter of introduction to my old friend, feeling confident that, so far as journalism of a high class was concerned, Shaw would find an appreciative and congenial opening in the *St. James's Gazette*, which Greenwood was then editing. Nothing came of this. What happened I do not precisely know. But I was much surprised, for there was no more acute judge of exceptional literary talent than Greenwood, and Shaw had certainly plenty to say and could say it well.

Years afterwards, when Greenwood was staying with us at Brasted, I asked him, casually, as we walked up and down the lawn together, whether he remembered my letter about Shaw, and how it was that Shaw never wrote for the *St. James's*. "The fact is, Hyndman, Shaw is quite unhuman, and I never could stand that." I did not pursue the matter much farther at the time; but I believe what really upset Greenwood, though why it should have done so, as a matter of Shaw's writing, I do not know, was the indifference displayed by one of the characters in a novel of Shaw's to the death of his wife. But the fact remains that Shaw, with all his brilliancy and industry, could not obtain in journalism that reward of a reasonable competence which men of far inferior attainments have got without great difficulty. I suppose if a man will persist in tearing up articles which were quite good enough, because he felt he could make them better, as Shaw did when writing for the *Saturday Review*, his literary conscience becomes a very hard taskmaster from the pecuniary point of view; especially when the writer himself is running counter to many of the most cherished prejudices of middle-class mankind, and even taking a malicious pleasure in outraging their tenderest susceptibilities.

Certain it is nobody can truthfully say that Shaw has at any period of his career spoken or written down to his public. He has forced his public to accept him almost at his own valuation. Even his jokes and paradoxes were at first by no means appreciated: they were undoubtedly caviare to the general. We Socialists also were downright angry with him because he would bring what, at that stage of dour conviction on the part of a fanatical propagandist few, we regarded as sheer

buffoonery, into the very Holy of holies of our great material religion. Nor can it be denied even now that, with a fair proportion of that diabolic love of mischief which he shares with his able fellow-countryman, Tim Healy, he took a direct personal delight in playing the malignant imp in the movement, and used to boast that he had set back Socialism in Great Britain fully twenty years, by his calculating adoption of spurious economics and advocacy of jocose politics as sound and sober efforts to improve society.

With that wholly irresponsible freakery as one of his chief charms, Shaw was never weary of irritating others by attacks which, though temporarily disagreeable, he thought they would regard with as little seriousness as he did himself. In particular, he rejoiced in outraging, purely as a matter of personal enjoyment, as he has since frequently admitted, the most deep-rooted beliefs of the Social-Democratic Federation. In the course of one of these fits of genial malignity he danced with all the pugnacious vivacity of his Donnybrook Fair ancestry on the sensitive toes of Herbert Burrows, as more recently he has gratified the same hereditary disposition to provocation and cudgelry by trailing his coat over the most cherished materialist convictions of Robert Blatchford. The result in both cases was as amusing, as perhaps it has been surprising, to the lookers-on. For, undoubtedly, Shaw got very much the worst of these encounters, which masters of persiflage not unfrequently do when they encounter men who are so intemperate and untunable as to believe in something earnestly and to mean just what they say.

Thus it came about that when Shaw delivered an address on Ibsen, which he made an excuse for

travestying Ibsen as a pleasing little side-issue of a joke, and also for elaborately misrepresenting, with much tongue-rolling enjoyment, all the theories and aspirations of the International Socialist Party, amid the vigorous cheers of the members of the Fabian Society, he aroused awkward criticism. Unluckily, for him, that is to say, Burrows took this for once seriously, and dealt with Shaw and his methods in an article entitled "Socialism of the Sty," which has not even yet been forgotten or lost its appropriateness. The laudation of individual self-interest pure and simple, without any regard or consideration for others, the recommendation to look only at the lower side of all human life for personal gratification, was dealt with as it deserved.

But Shaw, though very angry at the time on account of this merciless castigation, was not the sort of man to be permanently deprived of his amusement by the temporary uneasiness thus engendered. He is still at it and will continue at it, in my opinion, to his dying day. Yet, at that very time, Shaw was visiting all the Radical Clubs of London and delivering Socialist addresses, under anything but encouraging conditions, when certainly he had nothing whatever to gain personally by so doing, and was helping to produce that feeling of disgust with Liberal theories and methods the full effect of which we are only just beginning to experience a quarter of a century or so later. It is this early work of Shaw's in our movement, and his persistent backing of unpopular but important causes outside of actual Socialism, which I like to remember, when I also recall some of the far less meritorious actions which he has favoured us with, just by way of contributing to his own cynical amusement.

That is the difficulty with Shaw. He is the

poser-in-chief of our period. What his real opinions are at any particular moment nobody can say but himself, and ninety-nine times out of a hundred he does not tell you. When talking alone and seriously with an intimate friend on some important subject he can, as might be imagined, express himself as ably, forcibly, and simply as any man living. But give him even a small audience and artificiality of the most artificial type begins at once. He must coruscate, be brilliant, shine out so as to eclipse all else, no matter how much he has to force his intellectual machinery in order to produce the desired effect. In this respect he is not unlike Meredith, who also was never able to resist the temptation of straining for effect, when it was wholly unnecessary for him thus to impress his intellectual brilliancy upon the men around him.

But Shaw carries this farther than Meredith ever did. At times you would think, to hear what he says, that Shaw imagined himself to be superior to Shakespeare, Sophocles, Molière, Karl Marx, Isaiah, Swift, and St. Paul all rolled into one. Of course, he does not imagine anything of the kind. At bottom he knows his own limitations far better than any of his critics. But it suits his saturnine humour and sardonic wit to convince people he is an Admirable Crichton and a good deal more; just as it amused Byron to persuade one of his victims that mustard was the best possible condiment for gooseberry fool. I shall never forget when an eminent Italian writer lunched with him at Adelphi Terrace, how Shaw, in the presence of Mrs. Shaw, my wife, and myself, set to work to give this able foreigner the impression that his opinion of himself was all that I have suggested above. My friend believed he was in earnest and thought him mad. I myself was more than half taken in at the time, well as I knew Shaw's propensities for this sort of

eccentricity, and only afterwards when we were sitting quietly at home did I feel satisfied that the whole thing was an elaborate joke.

No wonder that Shaw now has some trouble to get himself taken seriously, notwithstanding the fact that he rarely fails to risk all his well-earned popularity by publicly backing any cause which he deems to be right, no matter how much it may run against public opinion of the moment. Thus, speaking in perfect seriousness at the Kensington Town Hall not long ago, the audience began to laugh when he got up, and to Shaw's great, or at any rate well-assumed, indignation, went on laughing till he sat down, though there was not a single joke or paradox in his whole address. A man in this country who has once obtained credit for being witty or amusing is accepted as full of fun at all times and on all questions, and Shaw having attained platform fame at first by his jokes, his admirers cannot believe that he is not always fooling for them to the top of his bent.

But there is a subject upon which Shaw is specially oracular. That is music. Some foreigners go so far as to say that he alone induced the people of this country to listen to Wagner, and that but for Shaw that great composer would never have had full recognition in this island. Many years before Shaw was heard of as an authority on music, a well-known French amateur said to me: "You English have not fully accepted Wagner yet, but when you do you will push idolatry of him to extreme lengths. I see it coming. You run your predilections in everything to death. Dry champagne is good, and you understand champagne. But dry champagne with every dish and all through dinner is a gastronomic abomination. Yet that is what you are coming to. So it will be with Wagner. You will swallow him whole, will

admire the deadly dull and absurd parts of his operas as much as you do the really fine portions of his stage-play, and, quite probably, will declare that those who do not care for, or are so presumptuous as to deride, long episodes of his unmusical droning, are incapable of understanding the highest form of orchestration and musical art. Worse than that, you will belittle everybody else in order to maintain a factitious supremacy for the composer who but yesterday you would not listen to."

All this has come about, as M. St. Quentin predicted. Not only is Wagner to-day for all musical English people by far the greatest master of music who ever lived, but those composers whom he did not like, or chanced to envy, have no merit of any sort or kind. The *Huguenots*, perhaps Scribe's masterpiece in the way of libretto, is poor stuff, and Meyerbeer's music is quite contemptible, because Wagner was very jealous of the Jew composer and sneered at the great septet in that opera. Such uncritical criticism as this, like the denunciation of Italian melody, is simply foolish. True artists know better. The overture to *William Tell* is none the less a delightful piece of music because Wagner's own overtures and preludes are on a higher plane. When Weber went to Beethoven and asked him to touch up his overture to *Euryanthe*, "Let it alone," was the reply of the greater genius, "the thing is good." Just so. Because the *Eumenides* is a terrific tragedy of the greatest period of drama, it does not follow that the *Birds* is not a perfect specimen of poetical burlesque. The *Contes d'Hoffmann*, by one of the men whom Wagner virulently contemned, is living on side by side with *Tristan und Isolde*. Ysaye is the greatest violinist I ever heard play. But Ernst could draw tears by the perfection of his smaller art.

Shaw, of course, knows all this every bit as well as I do. If I were to tell him that he himself had some of the Aristophanic wit but lacked the Aristophanic poesy, he would admit, in private, he felt flattered at such appreciation. He is no fool. Outside he would claim infinite superiority over the famous Greek dramatist. That is his way. But having taken up Wagner just on the rise he helped to produce precisely that excess of admiration for his favourite which my French acquaintance satirised beforehand. One day we were walking together when Shaw burst forth about Wagner. He took it for granted, as *more suo* he has done ever since, that I knew nothing about the composer, his works, or music generally, for that matter.

His verbal panegyric of that day has appeared in print since then more than once. I listened—yes, I did, I listened—with silent attention. What he said was very good. I agreed with nearly all of it except the usual exaggerated belittlement of every other musician, without which no genuine Wagnerian seems to have fulfilled his mission. It was pointed out to me in much detail and with no lack of sarcasm how utterly incapable I, who knew nothing of Wagner, must be of understanding the nobler contrasts and harmonies of orchestration, how much I lost by this incapacity to rise to the level of the highest combination of the æsthetic and the intellectual in the world of sound. As to the Italian school, that was a thing of the past. I ventured to hint that Mozart's *Don Giovanni*, though written by a Viennese, was really of the old Italian school in its highest perfection, and that I would rather hear *Don Giovanni*—such were my philistine and reactionary proclivities—than the *Meistersingers* any day.

That made but a momentary break in the torrent of exposition. Yet as Shaw overwhelmed me with

his eloquence and swept me away with his fervour, there would, do all that I could, slip into my mind, and act as a sort of jarring accompaniment to this symphony of enthusiasm, Albert Wolff's account of his visit to Bayreuth when the *Ring* was given for the first time in all its orbicular completeness. How silly those silly old dragons and monsters, with their stage properties, did appear as I read of them in Wolff's admirable French, how hopelessly wearisome the long periods of grunting and groaning from the orchestra, in semi-darkness with little or nothing on the stage, did present themselves, quite fresh in the *Figaro* of that day, when Villemessant still walked the earth and inspired his contributors to rise to the very Empyrean of brilliant journalism. I was even imprudent enough to laugh quietly at this ill-timed reminiscence of bright French criticism, which contrasted so strangely with the equally admirable English eulogy that Shaw was pouring forth in praise of the colossal composer.

That settled it. He began afresh. Then I knew what real objurgation meant. All the marvellous Hibernian facility of diction, all the unlimited Shavian choice of vituperative words seemed to be concentrated in one scathing flood of contemptuous denunciation against myself. It swept me along, it tumbled me about, it stripped me of all raiment, denuded me of any self-respect, and landed me a battered and forlorn creature—to my great surprise, walking apparently whole and in my right mind, by Shaw's side along the Thames Embankment. Finding that I was not quite obliterated, that I lived and moved and had my being, and that Shaw was out of breath, I ventured to utter a few still small words myself. "But, my dear Shaw," I said, "I know Wagner's music intimately well, and I was playing his overtures in

the orchestra before you were breeched." It was quite true; but of course he did not believe it, and so we parted at the door of the house he had come to call at.

Not long ago, in dealing faithfully with my shortcomings in type, he took my ignorance of Wagner for granted all over again. Why not? What has accuracy to do with humour? Just the same in literature. I told him once I knew Butler who wrote *Erewhon* very well, and considered that the merit of his works had never received anything near the credit due to them, and how, talking the matter over with an intimate friend of Butler's, Sir William Marriott, we neither of us could understand why it was that he had made so little impression on the literary world of his time. I spoke rather strongly about this. Shaw went off and read Butler. He thereupon discovered him, as he had previously discovered Wagner. Nobody knew anything about him before. These are the delightful eccentricities of our friend which tend to make life really worth living.

But now I come to the Fabian Society. This, of course, is serious history. Whatever the humour of some of its members may be, none can deny that the Fabian is a serious society—serious and dull. It has had, so it says, immense influence: of that all Fabians are persuaded, even when they do not feel quite so sure. One thing it certainly has done. It has carefully perverted a number of promising young University men from the paths of scientific Socialism and real co-operation with the mass of the workers, to a permanent occupation of an upper chamber furnished, where superior persons discuss social problems and propound doctrinaire solutions with little or no direct reference to the actual facts of life. The function of the Fabian Society has been to prepare politicians

and their supporters for just such an irresponsible, tyrannical, and half-educated bureaucracy as, to do them justice, somewhat to the alarm even of Fabians themselves, is now being dumped upon the community, without any mandate from the constituencies or any reference to the mass of the voters, by the Liberal Party. That this was not the intention of the founders I am quite willing to believe. You never go so far as when you don't know where you are going. A Frankenstein of corruption and tyranny hatched out by Lloyd George was not quite the ideal creation of early Fabianism.

Most of the older prominent men and women of the Fabian Society were, in the first instance, members of the Social-Democratic Federation, and learnt their first lessons in Socialism from that body, as has been very handsomely acknowledged by Hubert Bland, one of the few Fabians who has no taint of priggery; and has been perhaps a little maliciously but none the less truly and nicely stated by Mr. Robert Donald of the *Daily Chronicle*. Some of our Fabians, even thirty years afterwards, do not at all like that fact to be recalled to their memory; and it is certain that, from the point of view of genuine revolutionary Socialism, Social-Democrats have little reason to be proud of the work of the society which was an offshoot from their body. Not that the Fabians have not done any good work. One at least of the *Fabian Essays*, a booklet which appeared quite early in its history, that by William Clarke, was very good; and all of them, while rather commonplace to those who had studied Socialism in earnest, were well suited to the ordinary well-to-do man in search of half-knowledge and eager to be convinced that the favourite English vice of compromise might have full outlet in Socialism as in other fields of inquiry

and thought. There can be no doubt that the book as a whole, being admirably adapted to the intelligence of the superficial, rising just far enough above them to give the impression that they were thinking and learning something important as they read, prepared the way for more serious study later, notwithstanding, or perhaps even by reason of, its economic and historic errors.

Much better work was done by some of the summaries of statistics and pamphlets produced. There was always, of course, the tone of high-falutin superiority in the letterpress; but that did not affect the usefulness or impair the accuracy of the figures. Moreover, however deeply we may regret that so much industry as Webb has displayed, and such a power as he possesses of inducing Cabinet Ministers to believe he is profound; that Shaw's telling paradoxes and Bland's excellent journalism should have been devoted to the maintenance of what is at best a half-way house with very poor liquor—it is undeniable that these men have gone on for all these long years with no personal advantage gained for themselves by their propaganda and no great success achieved by their organisation. It is quite certain, for instance, that if Webb—whose whole texture of mind and conception of life is in entire opposition to my own—had chosen to give up his unremunerated municipal work and his devotion to his books, he would long since have been an eminent member of the House of Commons, and probably a Cabinet Minister. And the same is true of others. I do not know that this is any great compliment to their intelligence as the House of Commons and Cabinets go to-day; but it is certainly a tribute to their honesty of purpose and devotion to a cause which, to my mind, had little or nothing in it.

It was a long time before I understood why the

Fabians went away from us and adopted a theory and a programme which the oldest among them, I should have thought, must have known to be weak and inconclusive, to say the least of it. Discussing the matter one day, however, with Mr. Swan Sonnenschein, the publisher, I expressed to him my difficulty in apprehending why they had thus gone off upon this inconclusive mission. "It seems quite incredible to me," I said, "that they cannot see that Marx's analysis is perfectly correct, and that the only permanent basis of a powerful national and international Socialist Party must be thoroughly sound economics and history. I don't like to accuse them of intellectual dishonesty——"

"I do," was the reply. "That is just what is the matter with them. They saw that if they accepted Marx's teachings they merely followed the Continentals and you English Social-Democrats in the footsteps of a great genius, by whom they would, so they thought, be overshadowed. Now there could be no fear of that sort about Professor Jevons. He could never overshadow anybody. It was as much as he could do to obstruct a portion of the light himself. With Jevons's fallacies elaborated and made still more erroneous by assiduous cultivation, abundant epigram, and a fair share of paradox, they could persuade the world and themselves that they were all geniuses together. They have succeeded to a considerable extent with the incompetent, and that after all is as much as they could expect. If they had remained with you, they would have had to be satisfied with Socialist recognition only—apart from their purely literary work—and that was not good enough for them."

I believed then that Mr. Sonnenschein had hit upon the true explanation, and I accepted it as

adequate for the time. But not very long afterwards I was walking with Webb, and turned from the Embankment up Savoy Hill. We were discussing economics—the social labour theory of value, to be accurate. There was a fine horse tugging with great effort a cart-load of gravel up to the Strand. Quoth Webb: "You talk about labour! What is that horse doing but labouring? It is working, working hard, and working for social purposes too. It is just as much embodying social labour in the product, or adding value to it by the transport, as any human beings could do who pulled the same mass of gravel up to the place where it will be applied to social use." Needless to add, I pointed out that the horse was simply acting as a machine—oats and hay providing fuel for him as coal and oil did for a machine of iron or steel; that also if human beings are employed for services in the way of labour which might be more cheaply and better performed by a horse or a machine, the labour-value embodied by them in the product only represents in exchange what the same work could be done for by horses and machines under human control. But Webb did not see it; probably does not see it now. So I modified my view of Sonnenschein's explanation of Fabian calculation and dexterity in a sense which protected their honesty at the expense of their intelligence.

Years later I had two experiences myself which led me to give the Fabians, at any rate, the benefit of the doubt—led me to believe, that is to say, that they may really think in all good faith that supply and demand, final utility, and the rest of it are the measures of value in exchange. First, for my sins, which I honestly believed to be few and long since expiated, I agreed to address what is called the "Fabian Nursery" on Karl Marx's theories. It

was not precisely an interesting or interested gathering I rose to. They knew it all, or at any rate looked as if they did, beforehand. I had never yet seen youthful wisdom so efficiently embodied in the flesh. This was the coming generation, and what they did not know was clearly not worth knowing. I got through my tale of bricks, having done as much justice to my old master as I could in the space of an hour—a sort of pemmican palaver, digestible even if compressed, I hoped.

Criticism followed. The first to rise was a young man of about twenty-two, who had cultivated an air of æsthetic boredom and elegant inanity to a pitch quite creditable to him. "I never read any of Marx," said he, "but"—and thereupon followed a tirade of such utter fatuity that I looked round for his pap-bottle. The next speaker was younger still; he had "read Marx many years ago, but really had forgotten all about it." A nursery indeed!

Then I went down to Cambridge to address the Fabian Society there. A nice set of young undergraduates who, however, confessed themselves that they had never taken the trouble to master the theories upon which the whole international Socialist movement is based. They too patronised Marx, talked of him as "not up to date," and tried to impress me with the vast superiority of some unknown gods of political economy. But when pressed to name for me even one of these divinities of sociologic renown they failed ingloriously to produce their champion of the new epoch. In my address I made some fun of Fabianism and all its cunctating inefficiency, which, I am bound to say, was very well received. But sunk in the Jevonian bog I found them, and up to the neck in the final utility morass I left them, though I did send them down my lectures thereafter to help them to clear

themselves from the slimy grip of cultured incapacity.

All the which leads me to believe still more strongly that Mr. Swan Sonnenschein was, in a sense, a little too hard upon the aboriginal Fabians, and that, though the desire for emancipation from Marx was not wholly unalloyed with the hope of easier personal distinction, they did imagine that Lord Lauderdale, as transfigured in Jevons, was the long-sought economic prophet of the centuries. They did.

Political Economy is the dull science, I admit, yet I have contrived to get some fun out of it at various times. Never more than when I challenged all and sundry of the believers in the Jevonian faith in the fulness of its fatuity, professors and Fabians, students and sciolists, lecturers, authors, and pamphleteers, to meet me face to face and to compass my final intellectual overthrow at the National Liberal Club—to which, of course, I did not belong. It was my friend, Mr. J. H. Levy, formerly hon. secretary of the Economic Circle of that Club (for which I prepared my paper on "The Final Futility of Final Utility"), who gave me the grateful opportunity for thus flouting my foes.

Dear, dear, what a terrible destruction did await me, to be sure, when that great and terrible day of my address should come! I was threatened with dire woe, menaced with desperate disaster. Wicksteed and Webb, Shaw, Graham Wallas, and Foxwell—one or all of them would walk triumphant over my bruised and battered carcase. Not only the pupil Hyndman but his master Marx should then be sent forth on his final journey to the waste-paper basket of intellectual back numbers. And yet I slept comfortably at proper times in my bed, and no nightmare of victorious economists on the rampage disturbed my well-earned repose.

Unluckily—I protested against it, but Levy would do it—a copy of my paper was sent to all who were thought likely to attack me, including those named above and a few more. That followed which I had sadly foreseen but could not obviate. Not one of them turned up to effect my immolation. As there are still some Jevonian stragglers left, especially at our seats of ancient—very ancient—learning, and his theories at times reappear among the ignorant, I do not think it out of place to express the opinion that my address on his nonsense clears Jevons out of the path of progress for all who read it and for all time, now, henceforth, and for ever. Such is my genial conviction.

And this brings me back to Bernard Shaw, not so much in his attractive character of Jevonian straggler from the past into a new and more intelligent world of thought, though even in that capacity he is worthy of attention, as an amusing, if confused, survival of a benighted period, but as undoubtedly the man who of late years has chiefly saved the English stage from the reproach of being wholly divorced from modern interests and awakening social intelligence. Shaw as Fabian, Shaw as economist, Shaw as pamphleteer, Shaw as novelist, Shaw as speaker, Shaw as paradoxist, Shaw as journalist, Shaw as musical and dramatic critic, Shaw as faddist, Shaw as jokist, Shaw as revolutionist, is all of it pretty much the same old Shaw, whose extreme cleverness and surprising superficiality used frequently to enliven, and not unfrequently to bore, those who enjoyed the pleasure of his acquaintance and friendship in the earlier days of his interesting development, partly touched upon above.

But Shaw as dramatist is, of course, another man and another matter altogether. He is not Shaw "translated" but Shaw transformed. Necessarily

Shaw the writer of plays evolved from Shaw the writer of novels. That was inevitable. He began at that end in his characterisation. Though characters cannot walk straight from a novel on to the stage without undergoing considerable change in the transfer, and scenes which are acceptable when read by the fireside often become impossible when acted, it is, I judge, unavoidable that a student of society, of persons, of manners, who begins by writing stories to be read about the people whom he depicts, or exaggerates, or satirises, or uses as puppets ventriloquised into expressing his own thoughts, should, in the first instance at any rate, regard the stage itself from the reading point of view. He looks at his plots and his personages, that is to say, not from the front of the house but from behind the scenes. He is more inclined to listen to what the actors say than to note what they do. So long as the words are well and intelligently uttered and the tone of voice is sympathetic, or dramatic, or satirical, so long as laughter follows in the right places and the audience is intellectually pleased or amusingly puzzled, the author, if not too self-critical, feels that he has achieved his end. He has brought his intellect to bear upon the public from a new platform and has enforced his truths, or his paradoxes, upon his fellow-humans with fresh vigour and from a quarter as unintended at the beginning by himself as it was unexpected by them.

That is why the novelist or author rarely makes a good dramatist. He either wants to get all his story at once on the boards with its asides, and reflections, and musings, and psychologic interplay; to give, with all the biting force of a Paul Louis Courier pamphlet, the processes of intellectual vivisection which no abbreviated scheme of words, however perfect the acting, can by any possibility

convey when recited in the theatre; or he contents himself with merely clever farce and paradox which would produce almost as much effect if recited from a well-regulated talking machine—the last, of course, being an abandonment of the presumed attempt to use the stage as a medium of serious intellectual expression. To this Shaw has never condescended. Even his farces have had an undertone of genuine satire.

It seems to me, however, dealing as I am with Bernard Shaw as undoubtedly one of the effective intellectual forces of his time, that he is quite right in saying that he is not at all indebted to Ibsen. I have always considered Ibsen one of the most overrated men of our day. His plays bore me to death. They seem to me not only extremely artificial but miserably dull. I simply cannot stand his "Sandford and Merton" dialogue and his platitudinous plots. *The Master Builder* went near to be the death of me. If it had not been for Miss Robins's marvellous display of bright and intelligent acting, my wife would have had to call in four stalwart scene-shifters to carry me out.

Why this portentous purveyor of commonplace should have been log-rolled into being considered a genius is a constant source of wonder even to a case-hardened old cynic like myself. It is very well to say that the Choruses of the Greek tragedies give vent to a series of silly utterances which serve only to throw into higher relief the terror of the scenes between which they are interspersed. That is true. But the plays of Sophocles and Æschylus, thank Heaven, are not all Chorus; while the use which Aristophanes made of the Chorus took it up to a height both of thought and of diction such as no dramatist from his day to ours has even so much as attempted to emulate. No, Shaw owes nothing to Ibsen, for there is nothing to owe, and

it is little short of a literary outrage to bring the names of the great Greeks into the same paragraph with the prosy Norwegian stageman. But the hallucinated Ibsenite fanatics have done this thing, and I wish Shaw would tell them what he thinks of them in that connection.

On the other hand, as Shaw truly says, "a man can no more be completely original than a tree can grow out of the air." He himself may owe his impulse towards stage-craft and the dramatisation of psychologic incidents to Charles Lever and Samuel Butler. He says he does. I will not say he does not; because nobody can possibly know the truth of this but himself. But it is a very far cry from *A Day's Ride: A Life's Romance*, or *Erewhon*, and the *Way of All Flesh*, to *Major Barbara* and *Mrs. Warren's Profession*. To me it seems certain that, as I have said before, Shaw is indebted for his immediate literary impetus and turn towards the stage-play to another countryman of his own, of higher intellectual faculties and sadder failure of due appreciation than either of the authors he names.

Oscar Wilde was writing at his best and urging his unavailing protest against the society which pampered and spoilt him, but which at bottom he despised, when Shaw first entered upon London life. It is almost incredible that Oscar's essays and novels and dramas should not have had an effect upon the mind and the conceptions of a man like Shaw. The *Soul of Man Under Socialism* and *Dorian Grey* strike a deeper note than Shaw himself has ever yet struck; while though Oscar's plays are not at all of equal merit, their perfection of literary form must have appealed strongly to Shaw, whose intolerance of slovenliness in his own writing is obvious in everything he publishes.

But, after all, what does it matter? Not an

atom more than whether Shaw's own product in the world of letters will live, will influence others, smaller or bigger than himself, or will be forgotten, as the special form of society which he deals with fades into the long ago. Their chance of survival, however, is, I think, good. Who could have believed who saw them at the time when they were freshly produced that a comedy and a farce so completely artificial and redolent of the day before yesterday as *The School for Scandal* and *She Stoops to Conquer* would even now hold their own. Wit and humour, coupled with a telling plot, keeps even the oldest of dramatic raiment from decay. But then, on the other hand, I take it I am one of the very few left who still read with enjoyment the delightful comedies and extravaganzas of Meilhac and Halévy or recall with never-wearying appreciation the exquisite art of Madame Chaumont. I wonder whether Shaw ever saw her play *Madame Attend Monsieur*? The worthy successors of Molière are scarcely remembered to-day.[1]

The first plays by Shaw which I saw were *Widowers' Houses* and *Arms and the Man.* The former had all the drawbacks of being based upon a novel, and Shaw was still in what I may call his behind-the-scenes period. Much of it was very good talk and there an end. *Arms and the Man* was better talk; a sort of intellectual farce which deserved the success it achieved, and achieves still over a far wider circle as the *Chocolate Soldier.*

[1] "Once upon a time" I was a dramatic critic myself, though nobody knew it, at any rate for several months. Some day, perhaps, I may recall the episode and its incidents. I was then a member of the Garrick Club, and, as my criticisms made a bit of a stir, it used to amuse me to hear the comments and the guesses as to who the delinquent might be. This was not easy to find out, so long as a very few kept their own counsel, seeing that I went when I thought fit, paid for my own place, and sent my articles direct to the editor. If any reader of this note ever saw Irving in *Othello* or Madge Robertson (Mrs. Kendall) in *Nos Intimes* ("Peril"), he will understand where the fun came in! Laugh? Oh, Lord!

Nobody who had any appreciation whatever of satire and wit and paradox could help laughing; though there was really no sound bottom to the thing, and half the people who heard it and enjoyed it could not in the least make out what the author was driving at. A shorthand writer should have been told off to take down the remarks of the occupants of the stalls as they issued from the theatre. They would have been as funny as the play itself.

My own opinion is that Shaw saw the defects of his piece quite as clearly as anybody. In fact, when he made his famous jest at the end, I believe he half meant it in earnest. It will be remembered that the tale went round that when the audience applauded vigorously and the author was called for, Bernard Shaw duly appeared, to be greeted by a volley of cheers from all except one exacting critic in the gallery, who hissed as heartily as the great majority applauded. Shaw looked up and said, "I quite agree with you, sir, but what are we two among so many?" I should not be at all surprised to learn from Shaw himself that his own matured judgment of his production was not far removed from that of the hisser among the gods. Nay, it is even possible that in order to make his joke, and thus in a roundabout way to put his view upon record, he sent that obnoxious minority of one up into the gallery himself. I suppose I do not myself differ from the majority of those who have seen it in regarding *Arms and the Man* as a brilliant satirical skit staged for its literary epigrams rather than for its characterisation or its dramatic value. If I asked Shaw, he would probably tell me with due solemnity that deep tragedy underlies its apparent trifling and mirthful paradox.

But I should imagine the very last place Shaw expected popular appreciation of his dramatic faculty

would come from is America. Up to the production of *Candida* in New York, Shaw's plays had been no more than a *succès d'estime*. There was certainly no run upon them of any kind. And as all the world now knows, that production of *Candida* was a pure accident, and the result achieved a startling surprise to those who made the venture and regarded it as an almost hopeless risk. For the play at once became a popular as well as a literary success. Not only so, but the intellectual well-to-do began thereafter to enjoy the farcical travesty of its most cherished sentiments and the scathing mockery of its highest ideals. A shorter, more telling, and less didactic form of theatrical preachery than Sardou's *Famille Benoîton* captured that singular class of persons among the English-speaking peoples, who are educated just sufficiently well to know a little of everything and nothing thoroughly, and have a liking for wit and humour which deals superficially with some of the serious problems of life, without disclosing the fact that below the surface upon which the author so amusingly glides these same problems are being discussed in quite a different temper. That they do not want to know. They instinctively feel that satire, however trenchant, is not in the least dangerous, and that Shaw's stage Socialism will never really threaten their pockets or menace their lives. They can therefore afford to laugh at, and even to admire, literary stage-craft which gives them a new sensation of temporary dissatisfaction (for others) with things as they are.

But I am not engaged upon an investigation of our mephistophelean Beaumarchis and modernised Ecclesiastes as a literary exercitation. What interests me most, knowing him so well, is the relation which Shaw the dramatic author bears to Shaw the Socialist essayist and agitator. That, I

say, does interest me. In my opinion this is best to be discerned in the prefaces to *Major Barbara* and *Mrs. Warren's Profession*, and the plays so named which are appended thereunto. Take *Major Barbara*. "Money," saith the sanctified instructor, "is the root of all evil." "Fiddlesticks!" replies our modern prophet of the playhouse, "money is the root of all good." A pleasing paradox to those who choose to take it so. But it is much more than that. It is, as put in the *Major Barbara* preface, a very remarkable indication of the strange limitations of the writer's own intelligence. Shaw has never at any period of his career been able to clear his mind of a most superstitious subservience to the money fetish. His Socialist ideals for the whole community proceed adoringly upwards to a big balance at the bank for all. His conception of the social millennium is that everybody should have an income of £1000 a year. Even his views as to the uplifting of the workers reach no further than a vast elevation of wages for worthy persons who are somehow to work in a sublimated competitive atmosphere. Wealth, apart from money, seems inconceivable to Shaw. He actually quotes my old friend Cobden Sanderson's brilliant joke of "Universal Pensions for Life" as if it might be embodied in a serious proposal.

But "this is only Shaw's fun." Is it? Is it not rather the inevitable fate of the revolutionary in ethics and in property-holding, in religion and in sexualogy, who will persist in neglecting the fundamental truths of economics? Poverty is a curse. Yet is it the indispensable foundation of modern civilised capitalist society. Upon it are built up in successive stories the whole miserable edifice of crime, ignorance, disease, police, army, prisons, executions, millionaires, aristocrats, capitalists, and the like. "The reserve army of the

unemployed," as Shaw says, is a necessity for the elasticity of capitalism. Do away with it, therefore, by securing to every one enough money to live upon, cries he. He believes this can be "done easily enough." This though every existing institution is on the side of the rich; and the Churches and the Salvation Army itself, in which Major Barbara "holds a commission as an officer," are suffered to exist only on condition that they preach "submission to the State as at present capitalistically organised." He hates the whole system quite genuinely from bottom to top, and he really believes, in and out of his prefaces and plays, that he is a genuine revolutionist.

I thought he was myself, when he first took to Socialism. But the working class—whom, I say again, I believe he really wishes, in his unhumanly cynical way, to relieve from the horrors which afflict their daily life and corrupt the whole body politic and economic—saw the truth at one glance more clearly than I did by years of watching and study. They regarded Shaw then, and they look upon him now, as a self-deceived reactionary in practical life and a well-meaning farceur on the platform, in the library, and on the stage.

He does not convey to them the impression of sincerity. His Lazarus Shirley, whose honesty lands him in the lowest depths of misery, seems to them no more likely to emancipate himself from poverty under existing conditions by putting money which he cannot get, honestly or dishonestly, in his purse; than Andrew Undershaft, his Dives, could have become a millionaire and money-worshipper unless social and economic circumstances had aided him. It is not a case of one Lazarus against one Dives, but of a mob of disinherited, uneducated, and unorganised Lazaruses against a few Dives, holders of the means of

making wealth, who consequently control all the other social powers which Shaw would willingly disrupt.

Major Barbara, therefore, when, abandoning her hysterical and silly Salvation Army "self-sacrifice," she goes over with her etiolated lover to the Armament-making Gin-distilling camp of Unterschaft-Bolger & Co., because they have got money and the means of making more — she, having been convinced that without money nothing can be done—when the pretty, attractive, courageous Barbara, I say, thus decides to use her father's means merely to improve existing conditions for the workers immediately around her, she obviously gives way on the whole case. Money has won all along the line. Of course Shaw intends that it should, as in real life it does.

But the revolutionary moral in all this is not easy to discover. Nobody can make a revolution by himself or herself, and there is nothing very subversive in the discovery that if every one had plenty of money in a society based upon competitive exchange for gold and payment of wages—an infinitely greater impossibility than the realisation of Socialism itself—there would be no poverty and no property-crime. And yet Shaw believes himself to be, I have no doubt, as thorough a revolutionary when he declaims against the existence of a class war, and does his utmost to foist upon Great Britain the domination of an irremovable and irresponsible bureaucracy, as when he writes: "Here am I, for instance, by class a respectable man, by common sense a hater of waste and disorder, by constitution legally minded to the verge of pedantry, and by temperament apprehensive and economically disposed to the limit of old-maidishness; yet I am, and have always

been, and shall now always be, a revolutionary writer, because our laws make law impossible; our liberties destroy all freedom; our property is organised robbery; our morality is an impudent hypocrisy; our wisdom is administered by inexperienced or malexperienced dupes, our power wielded by cowards and weaklings, and our honour false in all its points. I am an enemy of the existing order for good reasons." Doubtless. But this is not revolutionary writing all the same. It is merely clever, but somehow rather soulless denunciatory rhetoric. It has all been done, and, saving Shaw's presence, very much better done, before.

Here is a passage from the play itself, however, which shows a very much clearer appreciation of the facts around us and is really far more revolutionary in the deductions which any thinking man must draw from the scathing irony of its bold statement of fact than pages of such attacks as those which I have given above :—

UNDERSHAFT. All religious organisations exist by selling themselves to the rich.

CUSINS. Not the Army. That is the Church of the poor.

UNDERSHAFT. All the more reason for buying it.

CUSINS. I don't think you quite know what the Army does for the poor.

UNDERSHAFT. Oh yes I do. It draws their teeth: that is enough for me—as a man of business—

CUSINS. Nonsense! It makes them sober—

UNDERSHAFT. I prefer sober workmen. The profits are larger.

CUSINS. —honest—

UNDERSHAFT. Honest workmen are the most economical.

CUSINS. —attached to their homes—

UNDERSHAFT. So much the better: they will put up with anything sooner than change their shop.

CUSINS. —happy—

UNDERSHAFT. An invaluable safeguard against revolution.

CUSINS. —unselfish—

UNDERSHAFT. Indifferent to their own interests, which suits me exactly.

CUSINS. —with their thoughts on heavenly things—

UNDERSHAFT [*rising*]. And not on Trade Unionism nor Socialism. Excellent.

CUSINS [*revolted*]. You really are an infernal old rascal.

UNDERSHAFT [*indicating Peter Shirley, who has just come from the shelter and strolled dejectedly down the yard between them*]. And this is an honest man!

This is telling enough, and Shaw might and could as easily make Undershaft show the crowded House how every attempt at improving the existing social system which does not tend directly to lessen the strain of competition for subsistence must turn to the advantage of the employer. It certainly is very remarkable that the writer, who records what Undershaft recognises and proclaims so clearly, is and always has been in practice not a revolutionary, as he asserts he is in his writings, but a palliativist of the more reactionary type.

But there is no explaining Shaw's self-contradictions. He is not continuous either in thought or in expression. The latter part of *Major Barbara* also, like the concluding act of *John Bull's Other Island*, drifts off into semi-farcical diatribe, though incidentally it smartly exposes the philanthropic methods of the enlightened wage-slave owner, who understands, as Crassus in his day understood, that well-fed and well-educated human property are always the most valuable. My own grandfather was equally sagacious, and sucked out no small advantage from his well-kept and well-educated "niggers." It is not the Legrees but the St. Clairs who make the biggest fortunes, and do the most to prolong the existence of a baleful system, either in chattel-slavery or wage-slavery. Shaw sees that. What he does not see is that impatient denunciation of social wrongs and breeches-pocket endeavours to

obtain an income for all are not revolutionary at this time of day.

Mrs. Warren's Profession has achieved a notoriety much in excess of its merit as a piece, because of the unpleasantness of its subject and the foolish action of the Censor in preventing its performance. The play itself is not nearly so good as Shaw could easily have made it. Throughout it reads to me as if he were a little afraid of what he was doing, and that Shaw the man of convention and everyday decencies were holding back the Shaw of biting satire and real social morality. But it is a bold thing to have attempted anyhow. The fact that he should have brought the successful owner of international houses of ill-fame on to the stage in company with her own highly educated, refined, and modest but not silly daughter of doubtful parentage, and should have introduced us to Mrs. Warren's associate and partner in a sober and serious manner, stands permanently to his credit. There is no joking in *Mrs. Warren's Profession*. The action all the time is treading hard upon the heels of tragedy, but the author too obviously lets "I dare not" wait upon "I would." There is no need for the apology in the preface. Mrs. Norton put all Shaw says about the plots of well-known dramas and operas, which the Censor and the public gladly accept and applaud, in crushing reply to similar criticism to that which he has to face, before he was born. There are a few telling additional illustrations, but the main argument remains precisely the same.

Whether the piece is tabooed or not is a matter of indifference as a question of art. Mrs. Warren in no way oversteps the limit of propriety, except in hints of what the whole world well knows is going on behind the curtain of our prudery all day and every day. Virtue and Christian property

marriage are and always have been based upon prostitution. A much greater writer than Shaw told the believing and the unbelieving that more than a thousand years ago. *Aufer meretrices et confunde omnia libidinibus.* Sacrifice a sensible percentage of your most charming womanhood to unbridled lust, or see your own families and the whole of society overwhelmed with sexual gratification.

The famous Bishop of Hippo knew well, personally, whereof he spoke. His authority on such matters is quite unimpeachable. And now our modern St. Bernard of austere personal chastity comes forward gingerly to repeat to us in the twentieth century what the roystering but reclaimed St. Augustine thus brutally shouted at our ancestors in the tenth. I say "gingerly," because Shaw, quite unnecessarily, makes Mrs. Warren a coarse as well as an unscrupulous person, thus giving Vivie her daughter a direct personal reason for resenting the smell of the gold obtained from the exercise of such an unseemly profession. Mrs. Warren is not old and is spoken of as "handsome." Why should she be vulgar and betray her real vocation, except for the purpose of allowing the audience and the reader to feel that Vivie has good grounds for abandoning a mother who is apt to break out in this shockingly uncultured way, apart from the disinclination to share any longer in the profits of a trade which had supplied her with her education?

Come, Shaw, admit that you might as well have shown us a Mrs. Warren sparkling, vivacious, well-mannered, and charming, as have revealed her to us a person of a much lower grade? Why, too, not defend her action wholly as well as partially? Born into squalid surroundings, she took her way out along the lines of your favourite "least resist-

ance." My belief is Mrs. Warren, divested of the unsocial vice of mispronunciation, with or without Vivie, will pass the rest of her life in the odour of well-preserved sanctity and will die respected by all who knew her. That will be after Sir George Crofts and she have sold out their "hotels" to a pious member of the aristocracy at a very high valuation.

My personal relations with Shaw of late years have been fitful but interesting. He kindly came more than once up to Burnley to speak for me when I was contesting that borough unsuccessfully. On one occasion he told the audience so many good things about myself that I felt that I, even I, should like to put in just a few touches of the redeeming vices, which I know myself, in all modesty, to possess. But the Burnley people, though they would not vote for me in sufficient numbers to introduce me as a disturbing factor into that national seat of organised humbug, the House of Commons, were convinced beforehand of all the good in relation to myself which Shaw so charmingly depicted, and applauded his eulogies to the echo.

I am bound to say, however, he was careful to supply promptly an antidote to this ointment of sweet savour, wherewith he anointed me in Lancashire, by going off the very next day to put much the same cosmetic over the illustrious John Burns at Battersea. We may be quite sure Burns felt that Shaw did not say half enough in laudation of himself, however excessive the praise may have sounded to people with the ordinary dimension of ear. But there is Shaw on record in print at Burnley with respect to the writer of these lines. I shall call him in as an unprejudiced witness to character if Peter challenges me when I stand at the wicket. After this speech about myself to

which I refer, Shaw and I passed a very pleasant evening together at the Bull. It commenced by my watching him with concealed and silent horror supply his waste of tissue by eating only the white of fried eggs. Since a well-known cricketer excused himself to me, years before, for having dropped an easy catch, on the ground that he had supped on oysters and hot port wine and water the previous night, I do not think my natural sense of the fitting and the congruous in matters gastronomic had received such a shock. Yet Shaw apparently felt none the worse for it. We actually discussed Shakespeare to a late hour of the night, and Shaw's observations on the great Elizabethan displayed none of that patronising condescension which at times he thinks it well to don for public edification.

But *à propos* of that albuminous repast of his, what a pity it is that Shaw should have stunted the natural growth of his mind and racked his intellect to fiddle-strings by his confoundedly inappropriate diet. Why has Shaw no pathos? How is it he is destitute of poesy? What makes his humour comparatively thin? Why do his dramas tend to peter out at their latter end? I say it with all confidence and certitude: because his food is not suited to our damnable climate, and his drink does him no good. In Sicily, or Tasmania, at Santa Barbara, Cape Town or Copiapó these vegetarian vagaries may be pardonable, though I should be sorry to try them on myself even there. But in England and in London, to say nothing of Ireland and Dublin, they are a sheer tempting of Providence to reduce a man to his lowest possible common denominator.

Take Shaw now and feed him up for a season on fine flesh dishes artfully combined and carefully cooked, turn a highly skilled French chef on

to him in every department of his glorious art, prescribe for him stout, black-jack, or, better still, the highest class of Burgundy of the Romanée Conti variety, born in a good year, and Shaw would be raised forthwith to the *n*th power of intellectual attainment. His strong human sympathies, no longer half-soured by albuminous indigestion, would bring the tears to our eyes and tend them gently as they coursed down our cheeks. Lyrics of exquisite form and infinite fancy would literally ripple out of him, while his blank verse and his rhymed couplets would be the joy of all mankind. As to his humour, Mercutio, whom Shakespeare killed, as he himself confessed, in order to prevent Mercutio from killing him, would be a mere lay figure by the side of the irrepressible funsters Shaw should furnish forth for us. His plays too would then work steadily up to a convincing and even delightful artistic close, unless he should think it well now and again to give us a coda to his dramatic symphony worthy to rank with the fifth act of *The Merchant of Venice*. But it is of no use talking. In this case "forcible feeding" is not legally admissible, and Shaw himself is such a fanatic on provender that I am convinced that if he could make sure of having Nebuchadnezzar his stomach, he would, like that potentate, go out to grass. The possibilities of Bernard Shaw as meat-eater and alcoholist must therefore be left permanently to our imagination for depictment, and their realisation can only be achieved in his next — what am I saying? — vegetable incarnation!

There is no doubt about one thing Shaw has achieved. He has made a great impression upon young men of ability and young women too. They appreciate him to so high a degree, on account of his literary skill, that they attribute

to him qualities of which, to my mind, he is wholly destitute; and some of them positively resent criticism of his plays, as evidence of lack of power to understand him at all. It is always the play which you have not seen, or have not carefully read, that contains, according to them, all those special touches that in the others you consider lacking. So, not to fail in doing justice to a brilliant fellow-Socialist, I have read or seen them all. The last recommended to me as a perfect microcosm of deep thought allied to delightful satire and charming humour was *Man and Superman*.

I had read the play with its preface, and the very smart *jeux d'esprit* appended to it, years ago; but I thought it possible that in the easy-going atmosphere of an old country house and garden I might have omitted to take note of subtle hints of vast profundity that would quicken my intelligence, or have overlooked delicate flashes of poesy that would delight my soul. So I re-read it with close attention. I confess, here and now, that the higher parts of my being are quite unmoved. The whole thing, from start to finish, is burlesque. I have chuckled at witty turns of phrase or audacious paradoxes. I have even laughed here and there at ludicrous situations and funny repartee. But the burlesquerie, the Shawesquerie, the inimitable unreality of the whole comedy forced itself in upon me all the time. Do what I would, I could not lose sight of the hands of the marionette-manipulator behind the scenes, as his puppets danced to his twitches at the wires, or shut out from my mental vision his mouth in its various expressions, as he cynically ventriloquised his characters as the mood was on him.

By far the most telling scene in the play, to my thinking, is that in which all the friends and family take it for granted that Mrs. Malone

Hector, *née* Violet Whitefield, has given birth to a child out of wedlock, because she does not disclose the name of her husband, assumed to be her paramour, and wears a wedding-ring which they have not seen put on her finger in a church, in a chapel, or even at the registry office. Jack Tanner's remarks on the subject, though he, like the rest, is convinced of Violet's unchastity, without a tittle of evidence, and his warm congratulations to the thoroughly conventional Violet on having had the pluck to present the world with a baby after the independent fashion so universally decried, are in the spirit of the highest of high comedy. Violet's furious indignation at the misinterpretation put upon her quite proper if secretive conduct by the whole lot of them bursts out most tellingly after Jack's enthusiastic championship of her as a devotee of free love. And the shamefacedness of the entire set towards Violet when they discover that all their pet little fetishes have been duly bowed down to, is as true to nature as it is laughable in the play.

On the other hand, the scenes between this same Tanner and Ann strike me, for the most part, as by no means excellent fooling. Tanner says some very good things indeed, but they are too obviously led up to, and to me this deliberate artificiality becomes wearisome and the long stage-play and longer speeches a bit of a bore. Don Juan is merely Tanner's other self in a better climate than ours. But he puts the truth which Socialists have been proclaiming, ever since Socialism was, very well; namely, that only by clothing even material motives with an ideal raiment can the best of courage and conduct be got out of men. The preachments are all sound. "It is not death that matters, but the fear of death. It is not killing and dying that degrades

us, but base living and accepting the wages and profits of degradation. Better ten dead men than one live slave or his master. Men shall yet rise up, father against son and brother against brother, and kill one another for the great Catholic idea of abolishing slavery." All the which we do verily believe. And to men and women who have never thought out even the most superficial of the facts around them it comes as a revelation: none the less revealing because it is disclosed in set phrases from the stage. Nor are the short essays on the function of woman and her creation of, influence upon and subordination to man, though partially contradicted in the mundane portion of the play, by any means devoid of thought-provoking acuteness "in this place," where, "instead of killing time we have to kill eternity." For my part, however, I shall not take Shaw's plays below with me for that purpose. But as they are increasingly popular they are beyond question doing invaluable destructive work up here.

And so back to burlesque. Why not? But why claim for it more? If Shaw can get his paradoxical dynamite, carefully placed and ready for immediate explosion, into the machinery of modern slave-driving society, by this means more readily than by any other, we can all conscientiously applaud, and, if we like, go our way before the edifice comes toppling down from this and other causes. That surely is enough. There is no need to discover more in all his clever destructiveness than the author has given us. The unreality of the speech-makers in *Man and Superman* is part of the show; for it is inconceivable that Shaw could not have made his puppets more natural flesh-and-blood-carrying humans had he chosen to do so. He did not so choose, and therefore he has

given us a witty diatribe-developing address, with Spain, Hell, and London in attendance, instead of a powerful comedy of real life and manners, equally witty and much more dramatic, which I believe he is quite capable of producing. Whether he will thus rise to the level which some of his less judicious admirers already claim for him, is, of course, more than I can say.

The last time I saw Shaw was when he was so good-natured as to propose my health at the banquet which the men who had worked with me for just upon a generation gave me at the Café Monico on my seventieth birthday. All of us had fought Shaw vigorously for many years, and some present would never forgive him for having, as they believed, done as much as any one to prevent the consolidation of a really powerful and united Socialist Party in Great Britain. But that night we were all at one, and Shaw helped to keep us together by the portion of his speech in which he abjured—I hope finally—that advocacy of bureaucratic domination which had seemed to us so wholly irreconcilable with any reasonable idea of a co-operative Commonwealth. What he said on this point surprised as much as it pleased all present. That Shaw should cease to change his attitude or to vary his frame of mind and join earnestly and continuously in a determined effort to use the inevitable social evolution towards a conscious transformation into an organised Social-Democracy is too much to hope for. But that he will always be a perturbing and thought-provoking element in our existing society is quite certain, for in that respect he cannot help himself.

I have devoted more space to Shaw, apart from the Fabian Society, than I originally intended, because it is quite clear that Shaw is still living and producing an effect, while his Society is

obviously moribund and its theories of life and action are as dead as Queen Anne. Shaw as a playwright and satirist, in short, is doing good work of the destructive kind. Shaw as a Fabian (with him, Webb and others) is an obstructionist and reactioner of the most conservative variety. No man has done more in our day to whittle away the ideals of clever young men, and to let down the enthusiasm of earnest strivers towards the new development, than Shaw. Mere epigram is the curse of oratory, and mere paradox is the poison of high endeavour. When to his paradox and his brilliant turning of the seamy side to his audience he superadds an absolutely false conception of economics, he is, in spite of all his really humane sympathies, a hindrance to the social revolution which he himself admits to be inevitable.

Though he has emancipated his mind from the crude ethics and still cruder art of the modern bourgeoisie, as set forth in the holy of holies of successful capitalism, he has never grasped the bed-rock truths of historic and economic growth, and the fetishism of money still obsesses his soul. He cannot think outside the limits of hard cash and high wages. This is a very serious disqualification indeed for any man who poses as a teacher and an organiser, at a period when the successful novelist and the playwright is supposed to possess, without study, all the qualifications of the man of science, the statesman, and the philosopher. Shaw is the brilliant spokesman of a transition period, and it would be easy to admire him unreservedly in that capacity if he himself and his followers would only refrain from claiming for him a vast deal more.

CHAPTER X

THE INDEPENDENT LABOUR PARTY

The steady agitation which had been carried on by Social-Democrats and Socialists of all sections had by 1889 roused a desire among large bodies of the workers who did not belong to any Socialist body for direct and independent representation in Parliament. The Social-Democratic Federation, by its propaganda candidatures, much as they were laughed at at the time, had certainly contributed its full share to the growing distaste for Liberal dictation, which manifested itself from 1889 onwards, as well as for the revolt which was rapidly spreading in the Trade Unions and at the Trade Union Congresses against the leadership, not to say the domination, of Liberal-Labour members of Parliament, such as Messrs. Broadhurst, Burt, Fenwick, and others, who made no secret whatever of their devotion to the party to which they owed their seats.

It is a little strange, by the way, to recall now that these gentlemen as deeply resented any aspersions upon their thorough-going independence as Messrs. Henderson, Barnes, Ramsay Macdonald, Snowden, and even Keir Hardie—who still makes a fitful show of a fight—do to-day. Nothing, indeed, is more amusing for one who, like myself, has kept resolutely to the Socialist propaganda all along, than to read again the violent attacks by

men now in the Liberal Government, or holding their seats by Liberal votes and supported in their constituencies by Liberal organisations, upon their predecessors in this pleasing and lucrative policy. History never repeats itself, but it has gone so near to repetition in this particular case that it is very difficult not to admit the close similarity of betrayal.

But the Independent Labour Party began well. If it was impossible to establish a really solid and capable Socialist Party in Great Britain, as we Social-Democrats had hoped and striven for, then the next best thing to it was a sort of half-way house which, while maintaining an attitude of hostility towards both the capitalist parties, would prepare Trade Unionists and others to adopt a more concrete and clear-cut creed than the nebulosity known as "Labour" without a definite revolutionary programme. The time was ripe for such an attempt. The great Dock Strike had only partially succeeded, and the strikes which followed throughout the country really failed one after the other. Anarchism with its propaganda of deed had never taken root here, and non-political Socialism or Anarchist Communism, as represented by the Socialist League, was obviously dying down.

Probably never in any country did so many able men and women uselessly devote so many years of their life to a cause which had no genuine vitality or hope for the future in it as the members of the Socialist League. Some of their writing and speaking was quite admirable. Unlike the Fabian Society, they gave themselves no airs, and the majority of them, until the absolutely unseemly and impossible elements got the upper hand, did good work and shrank from no unpleasantness in their endeavour to educate the people. Though

the *Commonweal* is long dead and most of the pamphlets and leaflets are forgotten, for several years they did serve their cause in the most single-hearted way, though some of them afterwards admitted to me when they had rejoined the Social-Democratic Federation that they felt, after the first few months, that success could never be achieved on those lines. It certainly was odd to see the favourite and the ablest daughter of Karl Marx in that strangely manned galley. None the less it might be worth while to look up and reprint some of the literature. In fact, there are many of those early writings which had a freshness and vigour that is sometimes lacking to-day.

At the time I speak of, then, 1889-92, though the ideas of Socialism had spread widely among the people there was, as I can see now more plainly than I could then, almost a necessity, among a people so much addicted to the fatal vice of compromise as our own, for a party which, though nominally Socialist, took a less serious view of its duties than the S.D.F., and was inclined rather to the moderate amelioration policy than to the subversive palliatives and revolutionary propaganda which found favour with the so-called Marxists.

Scotland was the country in which the Independent Labour movement began. And it is possibly on that account that Scotchmen have up to the present day dominated it so completely. At first they meant well and in Scotland they fought well. Cunninghame Graham, at the beginning and throughout, was dead against any compromise with the Liberals; and though his friendship with Maltman Barry and Champion, and one or two other short-cut intriguers, placed him more than once in a very awkward position, he always remained personally quite straight and vigorous in his opposition alike to Liberal humbug and Tory

reaction. In fact, at the moment when the Scotch Labour Party ran a number of candidates, regardless of the abuse of the Radicals or the sneers about "Tory gold," it seemed quite probable that Scotland, by far the best-educated portion of the United Kingdom, would come to the front and take the lead in the political arena on behalf of the disinherited class. That I know was the hope and ambition then, not only of Graham and Hardie and Burgess, but of many who since have fallen back into the old muddy ways of capitalist Liberalism. They were unsuccessful in nearly all these early ventures, as might have been expected.

But during these years there was also an active propaganda being carried on in the Trade Union Congresses, with a view to detaching the rank and file of the delegates from the influence of the political wirepullers, in which both Socialists and Independent Labourists combined. Much of this work, in and out of Congress, partook of the nature of intrigue and was largely conducted, so far as the Independent Labour men were concerned, by Maltman Barry, who was in effect a Tory agent, as Broadhurst, Burt and Co. were Liberal agents. Barry, who was a very much cleverer man than was generally understood, obtained complete control over Champion and was exceedingly intimate with Hardie, Burns and even Graham. It was an amusing incident in the whole matter that, as the movement became more distinctively Scotch, he changed his name, which was originally the Irish Barry, to "Barrie," as being more appropriate to the atmosphere in which he found himself; just as John Burns, who, like his father before him, was a denizen of Battersea, discovered a whole series of relationships with the famous "Bobbie" of that name, whose reputation he now imagines himself to have quite eclipsed.

But Barry or Barrie really had a thorough grasp of Socialist principles. He knew Karl Marx personally very well, had studied the writings of that great economist carefully, at a time when they were little known in this country, and, Tory agent though he was, had a far better appreciation of the real situation in Great Britain than the men with whom he was working. But for the need for earning his livelihood in the shady underworld of politics it is my opinion that Maltman Barry would have done good work for the people; though, later, his surroundings captured him and he even objected strongly to his own sons joining the Socialist party.

And here I may say that nothing is more sad than to watch really able and honest men gradually diverted from the service of their class by the pressure of their circumstances. It is bad enough to recognise how ability and genius which would be of the greatest value to mankind are constantly crushed to the earth by our wretched competitive commercialism in the early stages of life; but somehow it is even more depressing to see men and women who have begun with the best intentions and filled with the highest aspirations gradually brought into subjection to the meanest system of slave-driving the world has ever seen, and devoting themselves to political wirepulling and chicane because, having once got into it in order to keep body and soul together, they cannot get out.

Such a man was Tom Mottershead, perhaps intellectually the ablest of the old school of labour leaders. Mottershead was a Lancashire lad who had gone through the terrific child-sweating which was in his boyhood the rule in that county, and obtains even yet to a large extent under the beneficent rule of the cotton-lords and, sad to say,

with the consent of the mothers, who, having been half-timers themselves, take it out of their own children in like manner. Mottershead, having a strong constitution, survived all this and became a vigorous champion of his class. He stood as a genuine labour candidate for Preston, polling several thousand votes, and he told me that Sir John Holker, the Tory lawyer, who was one of his opponents, had always been a good friend to him from that time onwards. Then he became—that was the tragedy of the whole thing—one of the most astute and unscrupulous of the wirepullers who do the dirty work of the Liberal capitalists and their Ministers among the working class. I did not make Mottershead's acquaintance until he was an old man, much given to whisky and other strong waters; but I did so under circumstances which made a great impression upon me, and I regard Mottershead as the type of those of his class who are bought by both factions to serve their respective ends.

I was sitting in the office of the Social-Democratic Federation by myself, the Secretary having gone out, when a tall grizzled figure came in and, having taken a seat, began, with a strong Lancashire accent, in this extraordinary fashion: "I have been watching you for some time, Mr. Hyndman, and I have come to the conclusion that you are a pretty honest fellow." I laughed and thanked him for his mitigated appreciation. "You don't know me!" I replied that up to his entrance I had not had that honour. "I'm Tom Mottershead, and I agree with all you are doing, but I can't afford to say so publicly, and I have lost my enthusiasm." "You are in the employ of the Liberals, aren't you? I should think that is about enough to rot any enthusiasm you ever had out of you." "Well," said the old chap,

"you are about right there. It is not many of their tricks I don't know and, to say the truth, have not practised. I had to live. But I don't mind telling you, Mr. Hyndman, it is a dirty business, and I wish I were out of it." Mottershead then gave me some detailed information as to Liberal chicane of that day which has lost its interest, but, I judge, is very much like the Liberal chicane, or, for that matter, Tory chicane, of the present year of grace. His information turned out to be quite correct and was useful to us at that time. But his closing words were most emphatic: "Whatever you do, Mr. Hyndman, never trust a working man who gives up his trade for politics. He is bound to live as best he can, and the best will always be very bad for what you are trying to do."

I saw old Mottershead often after this, and as he wanted drink continuously, and was long past the temperance age, I always stood him drink, wondering invariably what a man of his undoubted ability could find in it to lead him to such continuous over-indulgence. I suppose bad liquor saps the will-power. I am no temperance bigot; but I would punish the manufacturers and purveyors of bad spirits and bad beer "with the utmost rigour of the law." But Mottershead drunk had a lot more sense in him than many teetotallers I have known quite offensively sober. Poor old chap. He used to go to the Liberty and Property Defence League, which in the early days kept open house and open liquor for the purposes of conviviality and conversion. It was the former, as represented by free whisky, that attracted Mottershead. Coming down the staircase one night he fell or tripped and fractured his skull on the stone steps. I was one of the few who regretted him as a good man gone wrong

and dead before his time. Mottershead, at any rate, did not believe that his Liberal paymasters who bought and used him meant any good to the workers. He knew better than that.

But Barry (or Barrie) and Mottershead both represented a class of men who, whatever their abilities and good intentions may have been to start with, are habitually employed by both capitalist factions to throw dust in the eyes of the workers, to preach to them the virtue of moderation, and above all to prevent them from establishing a really independent revolutionary party of the people, having for its object the recognition of the inevitable class-war, and the imperative necessity for doing away with the wages system for ever. It is useless to complain of the capitalists and landlords for resorting to the employment of such agents. They are as indispensable to them for the upholding of their power under a Republic or a Constitutional Monarchy as spies and mouchards are to despots. The two men named were, as a matter of fact, much better specimens of the type than are to be found in numbers throughout the country to-day.

In spite, however, of all intrigue and personal jealousy, of which latter there was not a little, the idea of independent political action by Labour men grew. Not, as I have said, in the sense of favouring the formation of a definite Socialist body, but as a middle term for respectable people between the Trade Unions and the unreasonable fanatics of Social-Democracy. That was the form which the Independent Labour Party took on its foundation. It is true there were Socialists, like Blatchford and a few more, who were determined from the first that, so far as they were concerned, the new organisation should give forth no uncertain sound on the subject of Socialism. But so little was

this generally understood, that when William Morris made his effort to bring about the unity of all Socialist bodies in Great Britain, nobody so much as suggested inviting the Independent Labour Party.

Nevertheless the tendency towards definite Socialism soon manifested itself, at any rate on the sentimental side. Moreover, in spite of what has occurred since, the Independent Labour Party, at the commencement of its career, undoubtedly had no love for either of the old political factions, and of the two was more hostile to the Liberals, who held control of the Trade Unionists, than to the Tories, who had no such influence. To say the truth, the whole thing was rather dull, and it would take a much abler pen than mine to make the early doings of the Independent Labour men generally interesting, clever fellows as many of its members were. What they did as individuals was, in fact, much more useful, as well as more attractive, than what they did collectively; and the doings of Blatchford, Burgess, Mann, Hardie, and others, were much more noteworthy than the drab and decent proceedings of the intensely respectable body to which they all belonged.

Why is it, by the way, that the working people of this country are so terribly afraid of shocking the tender susceptibilities of the middle class, or of offending in any way the paid advocates of the prevailing creed in any of its numerous sects? How comes it also that the Labour Leader, with two capital "L's," so often doubles the part of itinerant preacher with that of moderate champion of the workers? I know the history of the working classes of Great Britain I think I may say as well as any man in the island, and I have associated with them intimately for many years. But for the life of me I cannot understand the

respectful attitude which they adopt to all the prejudices of the class immediately above them, or the lack of real grit which they almost invariably show in their dealings with the possessing classes as a whole. With the exception of the thorough-going Socialists, nearly all the working-class leaders I have known have given me the impression that they were rather ashamed of belonging to the producers at all. They have most of them tried hard to imitate the clothes, manners and speech of their enemies. They are as eager to get out of their working garments, no matter how clean and how well-fitting they may be, and to don the garb of the well-to-do shopkeeper, as British officers are to discard their uniform and get into "mufti."

Even some Socialists seem unable to free themselves from these contemptible aspirations for similitude to the profitmongers in thought and dress, and their acceptance of buy-cheap-and-sell-dear economics and devil-take-the-hindmost religion follows hard upon this admiration for the very people they ought to despise. Their one hope is to keep public opinion, as represented by the capitalist-advertisement anonymous press, with them in their goings-out and comings-in, and to be able to accommodate their strictly limited revolts to the doctrines of peace and goodwill, as laid down by the employers who are starving them into submission. And they themselves are so apologetic!

I have many a time been hard put to it myself to keep from sneering aloud at their contemptible abasement of themselves. As Quelch has often said: Can there be anything more exasperating than to hear a skilled artisan who ought to know that the whole of society is living on the labour of himself and his mates, skilled and unskilled, talking of his home as "not bad for a working

man," his set of books as "quite creditable to a working man," his children as "a good-looking lot of kids for a working man," and so on? You never hear this abominable servile cant in any other country. Nor before the old Chartist movement died down was it nearly so common here. The systematic and degrading respect for their "betters," inculcated into the workers from their childhood upwards, tells its tale in after years. Only the ablest and most vigorous ever emancipate themselves completely from this sort of self-imposed thraldom and distrust of themselves.

What follows might come better when I speak of the Labour Party in Parliament, but it bears so directly upon the relations of the representatives of the workers to their "superiors" that I recall it here. I had been attending a meeting of the British Section of the International Congress Committee in one of the Committee Rooms of the House of Commons, and was passing out with the rest. The man immediately behind me was one of the most important members of the Labour Party, a capable, successful, well-to-do person, living in the full odour of methodistical sanctity, and representing a large industrial constituency by a great majority of votes. As we went through one of the lobbies leading to the House itself, another member whom I happened to know well was seated writing. He rose to speak to me and I blocked the way. I turned round and said, "You know one another, I suppose?" "Quite well," replied my friend, "we often pair with one another." A short conversation followed, and what impressed itself most unpleasantly upon me was the fact, about which I could not be mistaken, that my Labour friend addressed my wealthy capitalist friend throughout with an air of deference. What on earth for? From my point of view the Labour

member, if he was inspired by and stood up for the dignity of his class, held infinitely the higher position of the two. But he did not think so, evidently.

Time after time, also, when I have been present at Trade Union Congresses, I have been amazed to see leading Trade Unionists quite submissive and deferential to the capitalist big-wigs of the town in which the Congress chanced to be held. I am no advocate of bad manners or brutality on the part of the class to whom the future of human civilisation manifestly belongs, by the conquest of the powers of production and the abolition of class distinctions of all kinds. But there was much more to be hoped from the rough uncultured vigour of the men of 1839 to 1848 than from the smooth-spoken incompetence of the Labour "politicians" of our time.

It was because Keir Hardie outraged all the susceptibilities of the House of Commons, when he first succeeded in capturing the seat at South-West Ham, that I hoped we had got a man in him who, notwithstanding certain very queer incidents with Champion, Maltman Barry, and others, would make it quite plain that there was a class-war between the possessing minority and the disinherited masses, and that he, for one, had not the slightest intention of bowing the knee to those who kept his fellow-workers in subjection, no matter how urbane they might be to him, or how skilfully they might try to whittle away his antagonism. Of course, there was a little bit of theatricality about his first appearance, just as there was when Baudoin attended the French National Assembly in his blue blouse, the recognised garb of his class. But, looking at things as they are to-day, I am not sure it was any the worse for that. I did not admire Hardie's cap, I

did not think his clothes were either very suitable or well made. I thought his coming to the opening of Parliament to the accompaniment of a brass band, which discoursed quite other than sweet music, was a little in the line of a Punch-and-Judy show, or of the advance guard of a wandering circus. In short, I, too, felt for the moment that my favourite prejudices were being raked over in very unceremonious fashion. But I am now of opinion that this whole business was all right enough, provided it were made the starting-point for an entirely new departure inside the House of Commons itself. Hardie's costume was his own everyday wear, and the men and women who were with him on this occasion were likewise in their work-a-day dress. Would Hardie live up to his cap? That was the question I asked myself.

So long as he stood by himself in the House—for Burns, when he got in for Battersea, at once began his preparations for passing over to the Liberals—Hardie certainly maintained his independence most steadily and did not accommodate himself to the two-party system in any way. He stood alone, and if anywhere in the world the Italian proverb is true, it is so in the British House of Commons that "He who stands alone does not stand well." I always admired Hardie for his behaviour at this time, and I only wish it had always been up to this sample. It was the first appearance of Independent Labour in the House of Commons, and the fact that its representative kept quite clear of all the junketings and jubilations, had its effect, and gained for himself and for the party behind him the respect of those who were most bitter against his more or less anarchistic Socialism.

From the start of the modern Socialist movement in Great Britain more than thirty-one years

ago, Social-Democrats have devoted more attention to the question of the unemployed than to any other matter whatever. Nearly all our principal agitations, demonstrations, and collisions with the "authorities" have arisen from our efforts in this direction. No more disheartening task can possibly be undertaken. The mere physical energy needed to keep on the out-door meetings of wellnigh hopeless men day after day; the brutal indifference of the whole governing class to the consequences of their own system of labour-robbery; the continuous denunciation of the luckless out-of-works by the entire capitalist press, Tory, Unionist, Liberal, and Radical, as drunken loafers and wastrels, though they were, nevertheless, hard at work only just before; the steady increase of apathy due to lack of food and warmth, deepening into downright despair among the unemployed themselves; the truth, which it was impossible to disguise from ourselves even in our most enthusiastic moments, that even if we were successful in obtaining some advantage for this fringe of labour, its members would soon forget what they had been taught—all this makes any continuous attempt to serve the unemployed a very arduous job indeed. If we had been moved only by sentimental considerations, it is certain we should never have been able to go on year after year during "bad times" for a generation at this uphill task.

No doubt it is easy to draw a few tears from the eyes of the well-to-do by a touching description of a sober hard-working man, thrown out of work by no fault whatever of his own, gradually drawing out his little savings from the bank, first to supplement his meagre unemployed allowance and to keep himself and his wife from sheer starvation; then to enlarge upon the sad sale of the furniture of his home for the same purpose, while he wears

out body and mind by a daily tramp round to seek employment where none is to be found, his family getting white and miserable and woebegone all the time from the desperate situation, which becomes worse and worse every day; the fear and hatred of having resort first to the brutally administered out-door relief of the Poor Law Guardians or Charitable Committees with the horrors (to them) of the workhouse-prison and the brand of pauperism affixed upon them all: it is easy, I say, to get crocodile sympathy from the more impressionable portion of the class responsible for the perpetual recurrence of this state of things. But sentiment leads nowhither in economics and sociology, and mere pity for suffering would assuredly not have enabled us to keep going on this question. That probably is the reason why the Independent Labour Party, with all its good intentions, has been of so little use in this connection.

The reason why, in spite of all discouragement, we have persistently hammered away at this great problem of the unemployed, and have never lost an opportunity of forcing our proposals to the front, not from the point of view of the moral "Right to work"—for right and justice have no meaning under capitalism and profitmongering — but from the economic and social standpoint chiefly and almost exclusively, is that from that side alone can any real improvement come. Pictures of the frightful wretchedness brought about by these recurring periods of commercial crisis and unemployment, over and above the ordinary horrors of peace which are always close at hand, have been used by our speakers and writers to arrest attention and bring our audiences into a frame of mind likely to consider our proposals. But nothing short of taking the unemployed labourers and artisans off the com-

petitive market, and organising their industry upon a co-operative basis, can be of any permanent advantage to the wage-earners as a class.

To put the matter quite plainly, this suggestion of ours, which is perfectly sound economically, must inevitably break down the system of capitalism if honestly and capably adopted. Of this there can be no doubt. Employers are quite shrewd enough to see that. Unemployment and propertyless poverty for the workers are the two mainstays of the entire organisation of modern production for exchange and profit. But it is not all capitalists who are quite so frank as to admit this. Mr. Arthur Chamberlain, however, the brother of Mr. Joseph, has stated plainly that a large fringe of unemployed is a necessity for the capitalists. Take away the competition for starvation wages, and the wage-earners, secure of a decent livelihood by the national organisation of their labour upon socially useful work on co-operative principles for a high standard of life, will point-blank refuse to accept any engagement that does not secure for them a position of ease and comfort in return for their short working day. From this to demanding that the entire national resources should be used wholly and solely for the production and distribution of wealth upon co-operative principles without any profit at all, would be a very short step.

That, of course, is the unavowed ground for the opposition of the dominant class to our Social-Democratic propaganda on this head. Anything rather than adapt to modern exigencies the Acts of 300 years and more ago. Needless to add that the objections to our direct and clear-cut programme are based, not on the unsoundness of our views in themselves, but upon all sorts of hypocritical semi-theologic arguments and "human nature" absurdities, the hollowness of which our opponents

are as well aware of as we are. Not even when we marched the unemployed by tens of thousands to St. Paul's Cathedral and other places of Christian worship, and certain well-intentioned clergymen and ministers took up our ideas on the matter, would the capitalists and their House of Commons budge. They understood what we were about much better than the parsons and preachers did, and no amount of philanthropy had the slightest chance of success against their principles of business.

When, therefore, Keir Hardie, alone and unsupported—for John Burns carefully ran away—moved an amendment to the Address in 1893 in favour of the unemployed, with all the added effect of his queer dress and rough appearance, some of us felt that a little of what we had so long been fighting for might possibly be realised. For there was no laughing of Hardie down. He had the matter at heart and he made a very good speech, though not quite of the kind, as was even then apparent, which would achieve what we wanted. But it undoubtedly influenced the House of Commons for the time being, and gained for the Ayrshire miner the undisputed leadership of the Independent Labourists as distinguished from the revolutionary Socialists, who, however, were quite ready to back him so long as he continued on that line.

Hardie did, in fact, champion the cause of the class from which he sprang in the calm deliberate manner and phraseology of a man who meant serious business. The Grand Old Man himself, who was always on the look-out to buy inconvenient opponents for service in the buy-cheap-and-sell-dear faction to which he had devoted his inexhaustible resources of Jesuitical chicane and hypocritical rhetoric, paid Hardie the doubtful compliment of listening to him. The Tory leaders

hearkened also, with the same idea, no doubt, at the back of their minds. But, to do Hardie justice, these little attentions and the compliments he received had not the slightest influence in turning him from his independence. He went his way in House and in Lobby in the same solitary fashion he had adopted from the first. It is sad as well as not a little ludicrous to recall that when he got his opportunity later, in consequence of this speech and other good work he had done, he asked for the unemployed £100,000!

Somebody ought to write a telling little volume on "Opportunities Missed." It is just upon twenty years since Keir Hardie, following up in the House our long agitation outside, made this speech. Now, twenty years later, we are as far from the organisation of the labour of the unemployed as we were then, though our own agitation has never died down and the Independent Labour Party itself is certainly stronger in numbers and much stronger in Parliamentary representation than it was then.

As the Independent Labour Party grew in strength the need for unity of Socialist forces pressed itself upon its leaders, or so they said. We held a meeting of representatives of the two principal organisations and polled the whole of the members. The result was a very large majority of votes in favour of consolidation. The moment the result was known the Independent Labour Party Executive decided not to act upon it. I do not think we were much surprised at this strange conduct. In fact, I felt sure the dominant few in the I.L.P. would never coalesce with a body that acted on thoroughly democratic principles.

I have never understood Keir Hardie's methods. At times he is so thoroughly Socialist that there is nothing to complain of. Shortly afterwards he is as much involved in engagements with Liberals as the

most inveterate intriguer. To-day he will declare strongly in favour of votes for all women. To-morrow he will be arguing for the limitation of the suffrage to the comparatively few with unsurpassed ardour. One week he will denounce in private certain personal and political treachery as seriously injurious to the movement. The next he will be upholding the individual guilty of this behaviour as the most valuable asset of the Socialist movement. My own relations with him have fluctuated in much the same way. And the whole party of which he is a prominent leader is addicted to similar wavering. There has, in fact, never been in Great Britain either a Socialist Party or even a Labour—what the abstraction "Labour" means nobody has ever explained—Party which will bear any comparison whatever with the magnificent voting, and at need fighting, machine which has been constituted by the Germans. This, of course, is due largely to the absence of any proper system of education and in part to the lack of all discipline. But until the personal and faction jealousies and pettiness can be subordinated to a genuine anxiety to emancipate the workers there is little hope of effective action by any ordinary means; while a shock from without, leading to a complete overturn within, would, under existing conditions, land us in a period of almost unmitigated anarchy. For the continuance of the present happy-go-lucky methods the Independent Labour Party is chiefly to blame.

CHAPTER XI

THE DEPENDENT LABOUR PARTY

"THAT pig doesn't weigh as much as I thought it did, but then I never thought it would." This philosophic reflection of the humorous Irish peasant expresses exactly my frame of mind with reference to the British Labour Party. Put in more direct application to the politics of the period, the Labour Party has been a great disappointment to me personally, but then I never thought it would not. That was my curiously wavering view from the moment when the Independent Labour Party, then a declared Socialist body, instructed its delegates at the first important "Labour" Conference held in 1900 to throw Socialism overboard, and voted for a Labourism that nobody could define.

This was done partly in order to satisfy the semi-Liberal Trade Unionists and to obtain the advantage of the use of the Trade Union Funds which they controlled, and partly out of jealousy of, and in order to thwart, the Social-Democratic Federation whose definite principles were thought to be out of place in a policy of a compromise; as indeed they were. The gathering together of a large number of delegates from Trade Unions and Socialist organisations at the Memorial Hall in Farringdon Street in February 1900, was, however, considered at the time by the more sanguine as almost certain to result in a victory for that thoroughgoing

policy of opposition to both political parties, and a consolidation of a definite Socialist group in the House of Commons, similar to that to be found in other European countries far behind the United Kingdom in economic and social development.

It was natural to take this view. A people which had got so far in appreciation of what the class war meant under Chartist leadership, long before Marx was heard of; which had taught the continental workers so much in the way of Trade Union organisation; which had adopted co-operation on such a vast scale, though unfortunately tainted with profit-making from the start and all through; which had obtained democratic political forms and had secured the right of combination, of public meeting, free speech, free press, free discussion, and in the main of majority rule,—such a people might have been expected not to lag behind but to lead their fellows of other countries in the great international effort for the overthrow of wage-slavery, when once they even began to constitute a separate political working-class party. But it was not to be for some time yet and, as I say, some of us, at any rate, in our subconscious estimation of passing events, knew it.

What a glorious thing it would have been for us Englishmen if we had had a Frederick the Great to give us a really good system of compulsory and gratuitous education in the eighteenth century; or if Napoleon had been in control of this island and had knocked all our silly old political institutions into a cocked hat at the beginning of the nineteenth! Ignorance, apathy, physical deterioration, and the servility engendered by sheer hopelessness take a lot of shaking up. It is scarcely too much to say that the educated middle class of this island is better prepared to accept Socialism even to-day than is the working class, which everywhere

else is its mainstay. That our wage-earners form a deplorable exception in this respect is difficult, and in fact impossible, to reconcile with Marx's theories, as pushed to an extreme by some of his followers. But the apparent contradiction is intelligible the moment we remember that a great social revolution calls not only for the development of the material conditions which render such a complete and possibly cataclysmic transformation possible, but also for adequate intellectual capacity on the part of the members of the disinherited class to enable them to comprehend and act upon the conditions which have been made ready for such change by themselves and their forbears, unconsciously and as it were automatically. Economic development: psychologic comprehension. These are the two essentials for constructive revolution. Anything short of this cometh to anarchy and evil.

This is not to state that what took place at the Labour Conference of February 1900 was of no consequence in hastening on or retarding the growth of Socialism. On the contrary, I am very strongly of opinion that had the Social-Democrats and Socialists present succeeded in what they were striving for, such success would have accelerated the course of events in this country by several years. The definite acceptance of clear-cut scientific class war Socialism by a majority of a conference of this character could not have failed to produce a highly educative effect upon the workers all through the country. Socialism, not mere trimming Labourism, would then have been the rallying cry of the coming political and Parliamentary party.

But it was not to be. When this conference was held our steady propaganda of revolutionary Socialism had been going on for more than nine-

teen years, and so far as we were concerned there was nothing wanting in the declaration of principles. Compromise found no favour in our ranks. As it was essentially a Labour Conference the two delegates of the S.D.F. were both of them Labourers and Trade Unionists. They were James Macdonald, the tailor, and H. Quelch. The others were not so punctilious on this head. Of course, the overwhelming majority of the 130 delegates present were Trade Unionists first, and Socialists, if they were Socialists, afterwards. The late W. C. Steadman of the Barge Builders, better known as the "Karnty Karncil" from his strange pronunciation of the words London County Council, of which body he was a member, who afterwards became a Radical M.P. for one of the metropolitan divisions, was elected chairman. I knew Steadman well, and, though a Radical and voting regularly with the Liberal Party, I believe he was a thoroughly honest man.

In his opening address as chairman he expressed the hope, under which there unquestionably lay a fear, that the Conference would not be manipulated by wire-pullers. His own position as chairman testified, if he could but have recognised it, that the policy of arrangement had already begun. His personal popularity and the belief of the Socialists in his integrity had been used to the detriment of the latter. But the fact that Socialism should have been the issue at all at such a gathering showed that our labour had not all been in vain. There were more than 500,000 Trade Unionists legitimately represented by direct vote of their members. The balance over and above the 500,000 was composed of 13,000 Independent Labour men, and 9000 Social-Democrats. The whole Conference had been convened by the Parliamentary Committee of the Trade Union Congress. Obviously,

therefore, though the impetus came from the Socialists, the Trade Unionists, merely as Trade Unionists, could, if they thought proper, carry matters their own way.

Everything turned upon the resolution proposed by the Social-Democratic Federation. This ran as follows :—

> The Representatives of the working-class movement in the House of Commons shall form there a distinct party based upon the recognition of the class war and having for its ultimate object the socialisation of the means of production, distribution, and exchange. The party shall formulate its own policy for promoting practical legislative measures in the interests of Labour, and shall be prepared to co-operate with any party that will support such measures or will assist in opposing measures of an opposite character.

Nothing could be more plain, straightforward, and conclusive from the Socialist point of view. As a brief statement of principles and tactics for a Parliamentary party the resolution left little to desire. The first part declared out and out that the object of the party would be the realisation of Socialism: the second proclaimed that in the practical work of everyday life in the National Assembly some latitude in regard to temporary support of other parties or sections was inevitable.

The S.D.F. resolution was moved by James Macdonald, one of the earliest, if not indeed the first, of the Trade Unionists to join that body. Merely to name him is to recall to my mind a back room in a public-house in a turning out of the Tottenham Court Road, where early in 1881 I addressed a small knot of men on "The Curse of Capital." Macdonald, I believe, was one of them. No man who has ever come among us has obtained a stronger grip of the true economic faith than "Jimmy" Macdonald. He has felt throughout the hatred of the class slavery which he preached,

and he has preached throughout the hatred of the class slavery which he felt. Our friend Bernard Shaw once found in him a very ugly customer indeed.

This was at a conference on unemployment, held in Old Holborn Town Hall, or the Trade Union Hall hard by, I forget which. Macdonald opened the discussion. Shaw thought he had closed it with one of his clever, satirical speeches directed towards the destruction of all enthusiasm in the gathering, whether this was intentional on Shaw's part or not. The chairman, whoever he was, thought also that the business of the meeting had concluded with Shaw's speech and Shaw himself was quite convinced it had. Not so Macdonald. He claimed the right of reply. This was challenged by the chairman supported by Shaw. Some dissension arose thereupon, but Macdonald very properly insisted upon his right and obtained his hearing. Then Shaw for once in his life had the opportunity of listening to such a rush of conclusive argument, thorough exposure, and bitter ridicule turned upon himself, as he has only experienced in speech or in writing a few times in his life.

Macdonald was in no humour to spare a man who brought heartless chaff and fine-chopped literary ribaldry into a discussion upon such a terrible subject to the whole working-class as unemployment. As Macdonald spoke you could see the families starving, and their homes made desolate by the relentless and ruthless system of profitmongery that Shaw thought a fitting subject for jest. The audience sat at first in breathless silence and then Macdonald turned on Shaw. He simply ripped up Shaw's middle-class quips, and pseudo-economic fantasies, and threw the fragments at him, one after the other. He laughed heartily at Shaw's assumption of superiority and obvious overrating of him-

self, and made the whole of those present laugh with him not with Shaw. Winding up in a serious vein he showed why, as a member of the working class and a skilled tradesman himself, he knew that the question of unemployment lay at the root of all real change for the better, so long as capitalism and wagedom dominated society. Not the most skilled, thrifty, and sober worker and wage-earner present but by a turn of bad trade or a bout of ill-health might be reduced to almost hopeless misery, and be forced to join the great army of those whom Shaw's class had sucked wealth out of when toiling and stigmatised as loafers and wastrels when the "labour-market" was overstocked. I have never heard what Shaw thought of the trampling that befel his devoted carcase on this occasion, and I am convinced that his contemptuous attitude and joking were merely a pose. But he has never tried this sort of thing again with a working-class audience since Macdonald thus fell foul of him and offered up his smart witticisms as a sweet-smelling sacrifice on the altar of genuine conviction.

It was, then, this same James Macdonald, for many years past and still now Secretary of the London Trades Council—a close friend, by the way, of Mr. Frank Harris of Shakespeare and short story fame, when the latter was member of the S.D.F.—who moved the resolution quoted above. He made an excellent speech as the mover, pointing out with force and eloquence that the workers had been made tools of the despoilers in their political sham-fights long enough; that now another great opportunity for asserting their claims as the only really important class in the community, without which no social existence was possible, lay before them; and that Socialism was and could be the only possible basis for a party which had in view the emancipation of the workers,

the destruction of the class State, and the final abolition of wage-slavery and capitalism. All who worked in this direction were their friends, and all who went off elsewhere were their enemies.

The resolution was seconded by Quelch, and it would have been impossible to find any man who could do more justice in a cool argumentative determined style to the suggestions set forth. How any real Socialist could resist these speeches and refrain from voting for the resolution was a mystery, or would have been had some of us not known beforehand that sentimental Socialism was very little, if at all, better than dexterous Radicalism when put to the test. That the resolution itself and the speeches of the proposer and seconder found favour with the delegates was proved conclusively by the applause with which they were received. But applause is one thing, votes are quite another. A man cheers to express his opinions: he votes to suit his party.

The main amendment, after a trimming amendment by Mr. Wilkie, now member for Dundee, to meet this resolution was as follows:—

> This Congress is in favour of establishing a distinct Labour group in Parliament, who should have their own whips and agree upon their policy, which must embrace a readiness to co-operate with any party which, for the time being, may be engaged in promoting legislation in the direct interest of labour, and be equally ready to associate themselves with any party opposing measures having an opposite tendency.

Like most amendments of this sort there was no principle in it whatever. It was drafted not to express principle, but to catch wavering votes and to give Socialists the excuse for voting against their avowed convictions. It was fitly proposed by Keir Hardie, M.P., and seconded by Mr. Wardle, M.P., now member for Stockport. I

have expressed elsewhere my admiration for Hardie's attitude when he was standing alone in the House of Commons as the champion of his class; but when men and women hold forth to me, as at times they do, about Hardie's steadfast adherence to Socialism through all difficulties, I do not trouble about side-issues or obvious backslidings in Parliament or outside, I simply refer them to this amendment as quite sufficient "evidence to character" in this regard. Here could be no question of doubt or misunderstanding. The issue was as plain as it could be: Should the party representing Labour in the House of Commons be a Socialist Party, or should it be an intriguing, programmeless, go-as-you-please group, adding yet another purchasable faction to other purchasable factions in the House? Hardie solemnly proposed it should be the latter from the beginning and all through. And it was so.

There were, as said, 130 delegates attending the Conference. Of these only 53 voted for Keir Hardie's amendment, and 39 against it and for James Macdonald's original resolution—a majority of no more than 14 for the trimmers. But this obviously did not constitute a majority of the whole Conference against Socialism. That would have called for 66 votes instead of 53, and in my opinion the whole matter should have been referred to the bodies represented to vote upon again. An abstention of 38 votes out of 130, more than 25 per cent of the whole, was such a dereliction of duty on the part of the abstaining delegates as to call for a direct vote of all concerned.

I do not venture to say it would have ended differently; but such a referendum would have given a splendid opportunity for debating Socialism throughout the Trade Unions, with a definite

object in view, and this could not have failed to be of great service. The difficulty is to get a clear decision on principle from great bodies of men, who have quite enough to do to consider how they will earn their daily bread, who are desperately ignorant of economics, and who have that disgusting addiction of modern Englishmen and Scotsmen to compromise—which of course is only an euphemism for the surrender of the weaker side. At any rate the 53 to 39 was accepted as a final and decisive vote, and the non-Socialist political Labour Party was duly constituted.

The next important matter was to decide upon a Secretary. Here any one not accustomed to the habits and customs of English workers in Conference would have imagined that, being a gathering pre-eminently of Labour men who were protesting against the injurious dominance of the upper and middle class, an active Trade Unionist would to a certainty be appointed to this important position. Not so. A man who had never done a day's work as a manual labourer in his life, who was not and did not pretend to be a Trade Unionist, who had been a Scotch schoolmaster, who was then working as a Liberal journalist and was at the time, I believe, also Private Secretary to that very earnest Radical M.P., Mr. Thomas Lough, was elected unanimously as first unpaid Secretary to the newly formed political Labour Party! It seemed quite incredible that this should have occurred.

I was not present myself, for, never having been a working man, I thought, perhaps foolishly, that in spite of all the long years of education and agitation I had devoted to the cause of Labour and Socialism I was scarcely entitled to be a delegate. Naturally, I was anxious to know how such an extraordinary thing had happened; for Mr. James Ramsay Macdonald, though he had

been a member of the S.D.F., and was then an influential worker in the I.L.P., was not by any means generally well known or popular at this juncture among the Trade Unionists, who formed the overwhelming majority of the delegates. I was told that most of those who voted for this smart middle-class manipulator as Secretary thought they were voting for the James Macdonald who had moved the Socialist resolution, and that, the two Social-Democratic delegates being absent during this important vote, there was no one present to put the matter right. That the stroke must have been carefully engineered beforehand is quite certain, and what has gone on ever since gives rather a sinister complexion to the whole manœuvre.

It is perhaps worth noting that throughout this important Conference—for important in the interests of Labour it ought to have been, if it was not—Mr. John Burns, then as now member for Battersea, was using his utmost endeavours, no doubt by arrangement with his Liberal friends, to prevent anything in the shape of Socialism from being voted or acted upon. The very same man who, but a few short years before was almost daily denouncing Messrs. Broadhurst, Burt, Fenwick and others as traitors, time-servers, hacks of the Liberal capitalists, after a fashion which was considered not a little unseemly on his part even by us extreme Social-Democrats, was now engaged in playing an infinitely more nefarious game than those Liberal-Labour members played; was, in fact, using the influence he had gained as a Socialist, and the belief of many that he was a Socialist still, in order to enable him the more completely to gull and hoodwink his fellow Trade Unionists in the interest of the Liberals with whom he was now habitually associating. Yet even then it was

quite useless for us to point out to the men he was cajoling that his every action proved he had a close understanding with the Liberal leaders, and was using his power to mislead them in order to make himself more useful, and to secure a higher position on that side than he could otherwise hope to obtain.

As to Mr. Ramsay Macdonald, he is not a man I care to waste much space upon. I have seen a good deal of him at various times, and when he was chosen as Secretary and became the guiding spirit in the Labour Party, I felt pretty confident as to what line he would adopt. Personal ambition has been his one motive throughout. I do not blame him so much for that. As was said of a far abler and more prominent man, we "did not even object to his having cards up his sleeve; but we felt a little hurt when he solemnly told us they were placed there by Providence." It has been pretty much the same thing on a lower plane with Ramsay Macdonald. At one time I hoped against hope that, circumstances tending towards Socialism, Macdonald would turn in that direction too, as the most direct path towards success. But he saw his own interest too clearly to be misled in that way.

So up to now, as will shortly be manifest to all, he has been acting as a dangerous enemy to Socialism; while advocating it on the platform and abroad, whenever he felt it was tactically advisable to do so without risking a direct breach with the Liberal Party. A good speaker, a fair writer, and a man of considerable dexterity, he was certainly fortunate in his wife, whose premature death all deplored. But what has contributed to give him his political position more than anything else is the fact that he alone of all the Labour M.P.'s has had the advantage of a good education, on a higher plane than that of the Trade Unionists around him.

And the opportunity to use this advantage against both them and us—though the Trade Unionists even now do not see the matter in this light—was his astounding election to the Secretaryship of the non-Socialist Labour Party at its first Conference.

I have dealt at some length with this early development of the Party, because it may be regarded as one of the results of the modern Socialist, or renewed Chartist, movement, set on foot by the Democratic Federation in 1881, and, as the clash of class strife comes nearer in this island, these incidents may assume a certain historical importance. Already it is unintelligible to able Professors from the continent of Europe, as well as to capable inquirers from America, how it has come about that Great Britain has still, in 1912, no Socialist group in Parliament, and why, of the two or three Socialists who have contrived to get there, by a certain amount of surrender of principle, not one has yet delivered a Socialist speech on the floor of the House of Commons.

What I have said partly explains this extraordinary situation; but I am bound to admit that, as I shall have occasion to confess even more definitely later, the real reasons for our having fallen so far behind the rest of the world elude me even now.

It is doubtful to my mind whether the Social-Democrats, when they found that there was to be no avowed Socialism in the Labour Party, and they failed even to get a programme of practical proposals formulated, ought not to have withdrawn then and there from a combination which, though it might be advantageous in some ways, could scarcely avoid being very harmful in others. But hope lingered. There was a possibility that events might force the new party to move in our direction, and there was still a chance that activity and

criticism inside might be of more use than criticism and activity from without. Moreover, several of the ablest and most sincere Social-Democrats, Quelch, Tillett, Knee, Thorne and others were themselves bound up with the Labour Party through the organisations to which they respectively belonged, and in which they were doing admirable service. Consequently, we held on for more than two years in the face of growing difficulty and discouragement. Then it was decided to break away.

But the first thing which brought the Labour Party to the front, made an impression on the mind of the public, and gave direct evidence of the growth of a new political force, was the success of the party candidates at the General Election of 1906. Though most of the seats were, beyond all question, won by arrangement with the Liberals, both nationally and locally, there was enough of genuine independence displayed in some of the three-cornered contests to renew once more the sanguine aspirations of Socialists that at last a really independent working-class group would be formed in Parliament. Social-Democrats, having made no arrangements with Liberals, were again unfortunate in their candidatures. After a very good, and what most of us thought was likely to be a successful struggle at Burnley, I lost by 300 votes on a poll of nearly 16,000. Others fared worse. But our polls as a whole were by no means bad.

The total victories of the Labour Party were, however, a good deal more than respectable, showing a solid body—Shackleton, Will Thorne, and Hodge justify the epithet—of more than thirty members actually elected as representatives of Labour, and neither owning nor professing any allegiance to either the Liberal or Conservative faction. In spite of all previous experience, and regardless of dis-

couragements and disappointment, we welcomed this victory almost as if it had been our own. We congratulated our doubtful friends upon their triumphs, expressed our hope and belief that they would rise to the level of their great opportunity, assured them of our support throughout the country at any period of stress and strain, and generally displayed, or so we flattered ourselves into thinking, an amount of magnanimity in excess even of that which people of our opinions habitually show.

Such an embracing all round never was seen. I myself, being invited thereto, went to the great meeting of congratulation and jubilation in the Horticultural Hall, Westminster, and took my seat upon the platform among the new M.P.'s, who had come thither to rejoice in the cheers of the faithful. If there lurked in the back of my mind just a touch of genial cynicism as I recalled the past and speculated on the future, any such untimely investigation into the hard realities of life and the soft sentimentalities of these robust-looking legislators was swept aside as I looked round the crowded hall, surveyed the blaze of scarlet decorations, and read the telling mottoes inscribed all over the walls in praise of Socialism as "The Only Hope of the Workers," "Workers of the World Unite" for the Social Revolution, and so on. A wave of enthusiasm temporarily swamped my critical faculty. It was good for me to be there. I shook hands with everybody; I told all the world what splendid fellows they all were; I joined heartily in the general congratulations; I even delivered a speech of such abounding effusiveness that I look back upon it with pride to this day. It is pleasant at times to make a fool of oneself. I hereby register my conviction that I did it most thoroughly that night.

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And yet there was some excuse for my elation, even if it exceeded the boundary of pure reason. Here for the first time in English history sat a number of really decent, well-meaning men, who were going forward into the ancient Assembly, which had hitherto been dominated by landowners and burgesses, merchants, lawyers, bankers, and industrial capitalists, as representing the demands and formulating the aspirations of the working and wage-earning class to which they themselves belonged, which constituted the great propertyless majority of our countrymen, and represented the coming power in Great Britain as all over the world. If the rise of the middle class against the feudal nobility and their fellow-landowners under the Tudors, leading steadily on to the civil war of Charles and Cromwell and the final displacement of the short-sighted Stuart dynasty in the seventeenth century, was worthy of celebration in the highest of our verse and prose, surely here was a new and infinitely grander uprising which might well stir the minds and fire the hearts of men in the twentieth. It was not the chosen few on the platform or the gathered thousands in the hall itself who were to be considered. They might or might not be no better than unimaginative mediocrities; but the cause which they stood for and the changes which they were pledging themselves that night to advocate must lend dignity to the humblest among them. The last of the human slave systems was being attacked, even if the method of assault did seem rather ineffective and purposeless so far.

Thus it was that anticipation of a great fight, peaceful or forceful, and the Co-operative Commonwealth as the outcome of the conflict, rose up before me as I sat in that hall and rose to speak on that platform. I take it most of my M.P. friends to the right and the left of me would have believed

I was bereft of my senses if I had told them of the glorious mission which I thought had luckily called them into its service. But I saw it all as it might have been none the less for that.

A few months later I was walking down Great George Street towards the Houses of Parliament, when a very old friend of mine, who had been many years in the House of Commons, crossed the road and came up to me. He began by upbraiding me for cutting all my old friends, which I denied to be the truth, and told him that it was merely force of circumstances that had kept me out of their way. Then, of course, after a few words of greeting, and reference to men of our day who had passed away, or who had done something remarkable, we turned to politics. My friend, I may say, is a man of open mind, wide information, and sincere goodwill towards his working countrymen, as devoid as a man of his position can be of mere class prejudice.

Suddenly, after discussing the general political situation and condoling with me upon my defeats at Burnley, he said, "These new Labour men are of no earthly use to you, Hyndman." "No?" I replied. "What's the matter with them?" "Oh, they are of no account from your point of view. We have got them already. They are worse than the old lot you used to attack so bitterly. They pretend to be independent, but they are not so a bit in reality. You will see that when it comes to the test. We can rely upon them to vote with the Government to a man. They have a tremendous regard for forms and ceremonies, and already seem to know more about the Speaker's ruling than I do, and to have much more fear of breaking in upon order. Besides, they are so dreadfully deferential—it makes me sick." I told my old friend I thought he exaggerated, upon which he only reaffirmed his conviction that his quick judgment would be

justified in the near future. This only confirmed the latent distrust which I felt at the back of my mind even when I was chanting jubilations in chorus with Ramsay Macdonald and the rest of them, as already narrated.

Yet I can declare most positively, and this my friend did not deny when I put it to him, that on their first appearance in the House the Labour Party created little short of a scare, and this feeling of alarm had spread from Parliament to London Society. Here at last it had come. It was no longer "only the Social Revolution going down Fleet Street," as the tradesman in Fetter Lane said to his fellow-shopkeeper on the memorable 10th of April 1848, it was the advance guard of the Social Revolution, not to be bought off, or cozened, or flattered, or crushed into subservience, that had marched into the political Holy of holies with the intention of defying the Speaker and disregarding the sanctity of the Mace. Not the men themselves but what stood behind them engendered this semi-panic among "politicians" and Society.

I wonder sometimes if the worthy Trade Union secretaries, lay preachers, and skilled workers who constituted the great majority of the imposing Thirty understood what an effect they had produced. I judge not. At any rate they set to work to diminish it as hard as they could. And they succeeded. I went once to take a look at them after the chat in the street recorded above. I wanted to see with my own eyes what sort of appearance these champions of labour presented to the average spectator. They gave me the impression of dull and deferential respectability, anxious, and indeed eager, to show that they were just the same as the other members around them. I was not at all surprised to see the great majority of them afterwards become the mere tools of the

Liberal Cabinet, more subservient even than Radicals in search of a place.

The record of their time-serving and servility has, of course, lost all interest already. That a Labour Party which, at any rate, pretended to be independent, and proclaimed itself to be the real representative of working-class aspirations, should allow the Plimsoll Load Line to be raised by Mr. Lloyd George in the interest of the shipowners without a syllable of protest, thus condemning numbers of sailors, men of their own class, to death by drowning without hope; that it should support enthusiastically in the House and take credit in the country for having inspired the "People's Budget," which taxed the people more heavily than any fiscal measure proposed in our day; that it should refuse to support any resolution for the reduction of indirect imposts on the working class for fear of upsetting the Liberal Government; that it should join in establishing the bureaucratic Labour Exchanges which have acted from the first, and could not but act, in reduction of wages; that it should exercise no influence in favour of the great strikes which broke out largely by reason of its incompetence to do anything effective for the toilers, while the purchasing power of unraised wages was decreasing steadily, and then heartily aid the Liberal lawyers and capitalists in bringing about the surrender of the strikers; that it should refrain from pressing the crucial question of the unemployed to a definite issue regardless of order or of "the tone of the House"; that it should be satisfied with a perfunctory challenge to the Government on its shooting down of the workers, which timid challenge itself was never followed up; that it should quite contentedly allow hundreds of railway men to be killed and thousands maimed yearly without a word of criticism, although automatic couplings

would, as everybody knows, prevent this butchery; that it should use its utmost endeavours to rivet the wholesale swindle of the Insurance Act upon the necks of the wage-earners and establish a further vast nominated bureaucracy at a cost to the country of not less than £5,000,000 a year; that it should—but if I were to go on at this rate cataloguing the political crimes of the Labour-betraying Labour Party I should fill pages.

Enough to say that if the dominant classes of this country, after their first shock of surprise and fear, had wished to establish a set of meek, back-boneless trimmers and sycophants in the House of Commons to gull the workers as Labour men, they would have organised on their own account precisely such a "Labour Party" as that which has made itself the laughing-stock of Socialists from 1907 to 1912.

This was most strongly felt in relation to the unemployed. That terrible phenomenon of capitalist production is ever with us even in good times, and becomes nothing short of a national disaster in bad. Things were thus bad in 1908, and agitation was going on outside for a reasonable organisation of men who were left workless by no fault of their own. A pitiful "Right to Work" Bill, which was not pressed to a fighting finish, and a few commonplace speeches were all the Labour Party thought itself called upon to contribute to the help of these unfortunates. Hence the rise—and fall?—of Victor Grayson.

Victor Grayson comes of the working class, but has been fortunate enough to obtain a good education in Manchester, and this advantage he has used for upholding the cause of the people. He was, I believe, once a member of the S.D.F.; but the first I heard of him was in connection with the unemployed agitation in Manchester, where he

displayed, as I heard all round at the time, remarkable vigour and courage as a leader of the men. I had the opportunity of learning about this when I went down myself, at the invitation of the Unemployed Committee, to speak at a great meeting at which the Lord Mayor of Manchester took the chair. That was a funny business, so far as anything could be funny in connection with such dire events as were then being enacted in the great Lancashire city. Truth to tell, I myself created a scene by certain remarks I made, and when I went on to say that the men of my own class, including those on the platform, always looked upon the workers either as "food for powder or food for plunder," and proceeded to show that it was just because the unemployed could not be profitably used either in the one capacity or in the other that they were contemned and bludgeoned and starved, some of my fellow-speakers, and the Lord Mayor himself, if I remember aright, began to expostulate. I would not give way, but enforced my argument by what some may have thought offensive illustrations. Anyhow, the whole of the audience was with me, and eventually those of us who meant business had the platform and the meeting to ourselves. The thing made a bit of a stir at the time.

Well, it was his work at this juncture and his lecturing and agitating through the country which brought Grayson to the front and deservedly gained him great popularity. Just at the right moment, too, there came a bye-election in the Colne Valley, and Grayson, then a member of the I.L.P., was put forward as a Labour candidate. The Liberals, taken completely by surprise in a very difficult constituency to work up in a hurry, were beaten, and Grayson was returned to the House of Commons as a revolutionary Socialist.

We all rejoiced and hoped great things of him; the rather that the semi-Liberal wirepullers and preachermen of the Labour Party — Grayson is neither a Puritan, an ascetic, nor a man of God—did their utmost to thwart and belittle him in every way. The whole unemployed question was shelved as far as the Labour Party as a whole could shelve it. Then, suddenly, without any notice to his fellow-members, who, rightly or wrongly, he thought would interfere with his action instead of supporting it, Grayson broke through all the paraphernalia of obstacular balderdash which goes to maintain the much loved "order, order" of men who are anxious only to do nothing, and made a stirring but most irregular protest on behalf of the out-of-works.

The whole thing was done in an impulsive, ill-thought out way, I grant, and many Socialists who had been striving for consideration for the unemployed when Grayson was a baby could not approve of such a hysterical coup by a brilliant young platform speaker and agitator, when really determined and persistent effort was needed in order to do any good. Personally, I did not take that view. Grayson's defects were obvious enough to all who knew him. But he had done that which we had all been clamouring for: he had disregarded the capitalist-inspired counsels of Labourist wirepullers and trimmers, and had thought and acted in Parliament on behalf of the workless and starving men and women for whom he had agitated in Lancashire. He was turned out of the House of Commons at Westminster, but he became at once the most popular man in the country.

He had many of the qualities which would take him far on the right side. Though not blessed with by any means a strong constitution he had an amount of energy which, as in the case of "Jimmy," not Ramsay, Macdonald, might carry

him through the dead points of a consumptive tendency into as hale and hearty an old age as his promises to be; he had a platform style so attractive to the multitude that people flocked to hear him if only for the amusement of the thing; he was plucky, by no means badly read, and honest; pleasant in private life and with a great capacity for making friends. Never in my day in any country had a young man of twenty-six such a chance of making a great name for himself, and doing really fine work for his class and generation. Youth could live down a lot of blunders, and it seemed to me incredible that a sensitive, capable person of his natural turn for initiative could fail to see and to grasp the great opportunity which lay before him. In talking quite coolly with him at Manchester and elsewhere he certainly gave me the impression that he did see and would act.

The great opportunity came at the Portsmouth Conference of the Labour Party. Lady Warwick had a private party of her own there at the Queen's Hotel, and my wife and myself were among her guests. The very first day was devoted to a discussion upon the unemployed. To do the managers—Ramsay Macdonald and the rest of them—bare justice, they could not by anything they contrived have given Grayson a better chance to defend his action in the House, and to formulate a policy himself in the Conference, than they afforded him in this way. He had spoken well in the Provinces meanwhile. Everybody therefore expected he would rise to the level of the occasion. There was a crowd of reporters—English, American, and foreign—present, and ready to flash his utterances to London and thence to all parts of the earth.

I confess I greatly envied this lucky young man the glorious opening thus provided for him

by his own plucky conduct at the very beginning of his career. I only wished I could slip my somewhat burly carcase into his rather exiguous garments and take his place just for once, in order to tell mankind at large what I thought of the situation. For what could any one desire more than to have such an international megaphone to make his voice resound, full of its message of salvation for the disinherited, to the city and the world? It was, in fact, a most dramatic situation, which appealed to the imagination of every man and woman among us. We waited on tiptoe in a very agony of expectation for the great man of the day.

Time passed. Where was Grayson? Time passed still. Where was Grayson? Luncheon arrived. Still no Grayson. The day came to an end. No Grayson. It was all over. A very promising young leader had lost the chance of his life.

And that was not the end of the episode either. On the second or third day the missing man turned up—cool, cheery, unflustered, quite himself. Did he understand? I have never been able to say. But if he did not it was not for want of our telling him. We put the thing to him as plain as plain could be. He had sacrificed the great hearing he must have obtained, but yet there was time. The Conference would listen to him, the press would report him, the people would rush to acclaim him. He listened. An hour later he lounged elegantly against one of the pillars of the hall, and—carefully held his peace. At last more than one of us told him in so many words that if he left the Conference without making himself felt, Socialists as well as Labour men would have no further use for him: he was not only making a fool of himself but of us. On the last day he took a motor-drive into the country and never turned up at all.

It was a very bad business, and to this day I cannot understand it. Grayson has done a lot of good and some hard work since. He has never gone back upon Socialist opinions nor failed to carry on his revolutionary propaganda. But, well,—ready as I am to admit the value of his services, I can never forget that terrible Portsmouth fiasco. And to me it was the more saddening because the organisation of unemployed labour upon socially useful non-competitive work is, I am absolutely certain, by far the most important of all palliatives. It is peaceful, but it is essentially revolutionary. If there were no unemployed whatever on the labour market, the workers would very speedily come by their own.

But of the Labour Party as at present constituted what more is there to be said? It has become a creature of compromise and intrigue—a medley of selling out and surrender. At the moment of writing it is making a show of independence, and George Lansbury, who was on the whole the best organiser the Social-Democratic Federation ever had, and who made a fine poll for us as a Social-Democrat for Bow and Bromley, has shown some life with his new friends. If he and Thorne and O'Grady and Jowett could only work solidly together in the House as Socialists, they might actually prove the most satisfactory proposition to minorities that the part is sometimes greater than the whole. But my impression is that the impulse towards a more satisfactory representation in Parliament of the wage-earning class, who form the overwhelming majority of the inhabitants of Great Britain, will come from without and not from within the political group.

When men have got into the habit of entering upon agreements and transactions with the enemy, it is very difficult for them to resume the attitude

of independence, even if they ever were really independent in the class sense. If the Nonconformist Conscience were not spread so very broad as a Pharisaic phylactery across the foreheads of the leading Labourists, I might feel greater hope of their turning to the more excellent way of social revolution in place of following the easy (and profitable) path of bureaucratic trickery. That is only to say that in my opinion there is more in common between men of the Henderson type in political affairs and Lloyd George and his set than there is between them and genuine Socialists; and a Radical-Socialist party can scarcely fail to be essentially a corrupt party, with bribery and jobbery as its principal aids to success. That we see already.

In short the Labour Party, by its backing up of Mr. Lloyd George's sinister bureaucratic policy, engineered wholly and solely in the interest of the capitalist class, has helped to create a vast horde of irresponsible tchinovniks, after the Russian model, only infinitely better paid, who have now vested interests to the tune of millions sterling a year as against the community at large. The claims of these improperly appointed and dangerous parasites and manipulators must be constantly challenged and repudiated by genuine workers and Socialists. Until they are swept out of the posts into which they have been pitchforked, for political and other reasons which cannot be openly avowed, there is no hope of any thoroughgoing change for the better.

CHAPTER XII

THE REVOLT OF WOMAN

I HAVE watched the growth of the claim for the suffrage by women for a great many years, and I have known a considerable number of those who have striven for this sweeping change in the basis of political elections. The early champions of votes for women, such as Mrs. Fawcett, Miss Helen Taylor, Miss Anthony, were of a character and conduct that all must now respect. They were capable women who stood up for what they held to be their rights with vigour and ability. Yet they were treated with an amount of ridicule, and even insult, at the time, in the press and by the public at large, which was nothing short of brutal. Women of the highest culture were spoken of as if they were unseemly harridans of the lowest grade. They were denounced as "the shrieking sisterhood," and by some it was hinted they were persons of loose life. This was at the end of the old period, when women were not only shut out from being doctors, even for their own sex and children, work for which they are eminently suited, but were regarded as unfit for any sort of university training. When not abused they were laughed at.

I have never been able, while fully admitting the justice of giving the suffrage to all women if they claim it, to get up much enthusiasm for female

suffrage by itself. The suffrage is and can be only a means to an end: it is not an end in itself. An uneducated electorate has often shown itself to be a danger to the very people who cast the votes. We are in a vicious circle, even with men, when ignorance rules the roost. Keep them voteless, and they will probably still be deprived of education: give them the vote before they are educated, and they will use it to their own detriment. Unfortunately, we have never had a Frederick the Great in this country, who was wise enough to see, having probably learnt it from Rabelais, that education of a high character was absolutely essential for a nation under modern conditions. We have witnessed the result of our neglect time after time at critical periods, and are suffering from it to-day.

I have never, therefore, been able to look at the vote solely as a matter of abstract justice. Abstract justice in politics has no existence for me. Yet it is upon that ground that the suffrage question has been argued and is argued to-day. To refuse it was to proclaim the permanent inferiority of the female sex. This was made manifest, until quite recently, by the demand of the most prominent advocates of the vote for women that women should be given the vote on the same conditions as men. And that claim the majority of Socialists have opposed, because the practical effect of it would be to strengthen very largely the class vote of the well-to-do. The immediate effect, also, of giving the suffrage to all women would certainly be injurious to the Socialist Party. Yet it is the fact that Socialists have been active in demanding the vote for all women as the best means for instructing them in the full duties of citizenship, as well as out of gratitude for the splendid work done in the movement by some of its advocates.

On the other hand, there are Socialist writers

in Great Britain who have not been slow to point out that women here have advantages under the law which are never accorded to men; that they have been granted these privileges because men have recognised that on the whole this was just; and that women themselves are not slow to cry out that they are most unfairly dealt with, as women, when they are treated as men would be treated under similar circumstances. I am not concerned to defend the provocative and even bitter manner in which my old friend Belfort Bax has arrayed his arguments against the equality of women; but the amusing part of the matter is that it is not so much the style of his writing as the truth of some of his statements in regard to their sex which has made the women suffragists so furiously angry. They do not discuss or refute, they vilify.

Of the women who were prominent in this cause, in the comparatively early days of the struggle, the one who, more than any other, to my mind, stood in the forefront of the fight, on both sides of the Atlantic, was Miss Susan B. Anthony. Never was a pioneer more outrageously attacked and misrepresented than she, and that is saying a very great deal. Having, as I considered, infinitely more important things to do, I have never taken an active part in the work of obtaining the vote for women, though I have always upheld the claim for universal adult suffrage for both sexes. But it is certain that the cause had in Miss Anthony a champion of quite exceptional ability and tact.

The popular impression about her was quite erroneous, as it nearly always is in the case of men or women who adopt and push to the front an extreme programme. Of course she had raised her voice fairly loud, or she never could have been heard at all in the controversies of the time. But

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there was nothing about her of the shrill virago or infuriated petroleuse. At the time I met her towards the close of her life I found her a charming, dignified, and highly cultured lady with fine grey hair, lively intelligent eyes, a venerable and imposing face, and a delightful smile—the sort of person who would do credit to any movement.

In the course of our conversation she spoke quite calmly and confidently of the success of the cause to which she had devoted her life—years may have brought the philosophic mind, but I was told she had always been the same — and altogether she gave me the impression of being a reasoning enthusiast who only used the emotions to give force to vigorous argument. I gathered from her conversation that, although she believed firmly in the absolute right of her sex, as being at least as important an element as man in society, to have all the political rights which man possessed, yet that which stirred and supported her most in her long campaign was the conviction that in no other way could woman as a whole relieve herself from the condition of semi-slavery to which modern civilisation still doomed her. Only by the vote could women obtain that freedom and recognition to which they were entitled.

I pointed out in reply to her contention that vast numbers, it might be said the great majority, of men were economically in the same position, and that, so far, the vote had done little to emancipate them. Then, she replied, women, if they had the vote, could scarcely do worse, and at least they are entitled to try in turn what they can make of the suffrage. From her point of view the position of woman in regard to the family and the State could never be put on a sound basis until she had her full share in voting for or against the laws she was bound to obey. That women were behind

men in education and initiative she attributed to the fact that they had never had a fair chance.

There can be no doubt that the work done and the influence exerted by Miss Anthony had a great share in bringing the question of votes for women to the stage which it has reached to-day. In fact, the grant of the municipal suffrage to women is unquestionably due to what was done by women of her description in Great Britain. It is a little significant also that this vote has been almost invariably cast against Socialists in all local elections, even when we alone were trying to obtain better conditions for women in their ordinary work-a-day life. Abstract justice works out queerly when class questions are brought into the political or municipal field. In this case it has meant the strengthening of the reactionary and slave-driving element in municipal contests.

But the old spade-work of the women and their champions seems a long way off, now that we have arrived at what it is no exaggeration to call the Pankhurst-Pethickian era of anarchistic sabotage. The intermediate period was remarkable for the enthusiasm and vigour displayed, which, beyond all question, produced a great effect upon the public mind. Not that, from the first, hysteria was far from the surface. I have known Mrs. Pankhurst and her family for many long years. Her husband, Dr. Pankhurst, was a barrister, a semi-Socialist, and in action a thoroughly independent politician, who stood for Parliament as a Radical-Labour man and was, of course, bitterly opposed by the highly paid hacks of the Liberal Party, who grovel to those who have intrigued themselves into office and do their utmost to crush down any attempt at real progress which might endanger the official programme of make-believe. Dr. Pankhurst was not strong enough to make head against these

mean influences, and consequently a useful and pleasing personality, who did all he could do for the benefit of the people according to his lights, and would have done more if opportunity had offered, was kept out of the House of Commons and unfortunately died before the tide could set his way.

Mrs. Pankhurst had always been a strong champion of woman suffrage, but at the time I knew her best she was a Socialist first and a Suffragist afterwards. It was in her capacity as Socialist that she took the chair for me at a big meeting in one of the Manchester Theatres, and delivered an exceedingly good speech. Active, well-read, pleasant, and very good-looking, Mrs. Pankhurst was at this time a valuable "asset," to use Keir Hardie's word, applied by him in a much more doubtful connection, of the Independent Labour Party. She did at that time an immense amount of good and useful work, and though more advanced than her husband supported him most loyally and vigorously in all his political and social undertakings. At this meeting I refer to, I incidentally alluded to Universal Suffrage, and, without any intention of limitation, spoke of man as a generic name to include both sexes.

Afterwards, when the meeting broke up and I went behind the scenes, Miss Christabel, then a girl of not more than eighteen, whose acquaintance I had made when she was quite a child, came up to me and assailed me with the utmost virulence by reason of this wrong I had done her sex. I could not believe at first, seeing that we had always had Universal Adult Suffrage on our programme, and that Herbert Burrows and other Socialists had vigorously asserted, and, if anything, over-asserted, the claims of women, that the young lady, as

charming in appearance as she was vehement in her discourse, was in earnest in her stalwart objurgations.

But she speedily made it apparent to me that she was. Then, I am bound to say, I began to laugh. This made matters worse still, and she took up her parable against me with a whole-souled prophetic indignation which, for the life of me, I could not regard except from the ridiculous side. It was all sex. I was like unto the rest of that section of the human race to which, owing to accident of birth, I belonged, and it was my object, as I showed by my use of the word "manhood," to keep women in permanent subjection. It has not been my experience of life that women, whatever may be their general social disabilities as a sex, are very easy to put upon or subjugate as individuals. I told the fair Miss Christabel this, and even went so far as to hint to the young lady that this attack of hers was a not unfair example of the truth as manifested unto me in the past, and I still laughed. I offered at last to shake hands with her, but she would not.

I have not spoken to Miss Pankhurst from that day to this, but I have heard her speak frequently at elections and elsewhere, and, as knowing something myself in days gone by of the exhausting nature of out-of-door oratory, I have been quite amazed at her marvellous powers of endurance and her admirable capacity for exposition and repartee. In the North-West Manchester Election in particular, when Mr. Winston Churchill met with a crushing rebuff, I recall Miss Christabel's efforts at out-door gatherings as having been quite remarkable. At one open space we were exhorting the crowd almost in competition with her, and I admit that she quite held her own. She is also one of the best-educated young women

in Great Britain. Yet all through it, somehow, I hear that strained hysterical note which first assailed me at the meeting I have spoken of. However, if a tinge of hysteria will keep her going at this rate, there is more physical and mental vigour to be got out of that nervous overstrain than I had ever imagined.

Anyway, call it hysteria, enthusiasm, or what you will, it is indisputable that the women in their agitation for many years past have taught the men a great deal in the way of determination and self-sacrifice. I cannot believe in the suffrage, limited practically to well-to-do women, as being worth any serious effort. But the women themselves did and do so believe, and they made the utmost use of their sex privileges under man-made law and custom to get as far as they could before giving actual battle. Small blame to them for that. It was their sole object to gain their point, and they used the means at hand to attain it.

One great advantage they had almost from the start, when Mrs. Pankhurst gave up her position at Manchester to throw herself into the movement with the energetic and irreconcilable Christabel, backed up by such splendid workers in the cause they had adopted as Mrs. Despard, Mrs. Cobden Sanderson, Mrs. Montefiore, whose passive resistance to taxes at Hammersmith created a stir, and many more. Most of these women were ladies of the highest culture and good means. And the one great advantage to which I refer was that plenty of money was always forthcoming. Everybody who has had anything to do with great public agitations knows what this means. Enthusiasm and religious fervour will do immense things, have done and are doing great work. But by themselves and without ample money to take advantage of opportunities,

they are bound sooner or later to flag. In this case, however, thousands of pounds were always to be got, not only from the men and women, particularly Mr. and Mrs. Pethick Lawrence, who were in the forefront of the movement, but from quite a large section of well-to-do sympathisers. This made all the difference. I do not believe anything like the same amount of funds could have been obtained at that time for a propaganda in favour of the suffrage for *all* women. Then the question became more and more one of sex against sex. This, I know, is not infrequently denied. But I have read their literature, I have heard their speeches, and there is no doubt in my mind that this was the main motive power of the whole movement.

That does not at all detract from the merit of the work done for what they believed in—the emancipation of women on the same plane as man by political means. When women such as those named above went deliberately to gaol and stopped there for the sake of an idea, they obviously were acting in perfect good faith. Neither can their action be laid to the door of a desire for self-advertisement. Mrs. Cobden Sanderson, Mrs. Despard, and Mrs. Montefiore, not to speak of others, were all obtaining as much advertisement as they could possibly want beforehand, in and out of the Socialist movement of which they were and are a part. Knowing them all very well, I have indeed wondered what induced these ladies to exchange their comfortable homes and enjoyable and useful lives in them for unpleasant and even almost torturing immurement—for Holloway Gaol is a filthy hole infested with vermin—in a worthy specimen of a bourgeois prison-house.

I know very well I would not run half a risk of such punishment in order to get votes for the two or three millions of my fellow-males still unenfran-

chised, nor certainly to get a vote which I have not got and could easily get for the asking for myself; though I might be ready to undergo similar treatment on more serious grounds. However, they did it, at a time of life when the first ardour of self-sacrificing youth had passed away. It was quite in the line of Russian or Italian self-immolation for a cause, though, of course, not so terrible. And what is more surprising to me, they would all of them be ready to do the same again, and, if they wearied or were regarded as having done their share, still others would be eager to rush to the front in the same way.

And the result of all this fervour and the trials and condemnations was soon seen. Public opinion was turning round towards the granting of their claim for the Limited Bill, though all really genuine democrats, invariably the minority, were against it. Politicians of both parties first thought, after the heckling and abuse they received at election times, they might lose votes by opposing the measure; then began to believe they might gain votes by granting the demand; and the misguided Labourists, led astray as usual by mere sentiment, backed it.

The great meeting in Hyde Park was, it may be said, a crowning effort on these lines of public agitation and passive resistance. I have seen many immense demonstrations in Hyde Park, and have myself helped to organise not a few, including the great International Congress Demonstration referred to elsewhere. But I have never seen a larger, better-managed, or in every way more imposing gathering than this one. The procession of women comprised many of the most distinguished persons of their sex in Great Britain, and I felt, as I looked on and listened, that—though a large number were present no doubt out of sheer curiosity, and some of the opponents did not

behave any too well—this whole affair was unconsciously something more than a mere suffrage demonstration. It was part of that almost universal revolt of woman against present social conditions, which has gone on side by side with the simultaneously growing protest of the wage-slaves, and will not improbably be combined with that movement before any important result is achieved. However that may be, this vast concourse of women, brought together for one object, was exceedingly impressive, and I for one felt that the Limited Bill, much as I disliked it, would become law within a calculable period. Right or wrong, it was almost impossible for a middle-class government to resist such pressure from the most intelligent female members of the middle class.

But nobody could have anticipated what followed. The Suffragists knew that victory was within their grasp. Never had such a victory been won within so short a period and, all things taken into consideration, at so small a cost. That was how it looked when all parties in the House of Commons, whether they liked it or not, were prepared to see the so-called "Conciliation Bill" passed into law before many years were over. But this was not enough for the more vehement advocates of the suffrage, male and female. Already many things had been done by the women which, had the same breaches of the law—assaults upon the police, etc. —been committed by men, would have met with very serious punishment; but because, and only because, the law-breakers were women, they had been treated very lightly. Then, as we all know, downright Anarchism, backed by very large sums of money, got the upper hand, and society was to be terrorised by breaking shopkeepers' windows, axe-throwing, and theatre-incendiarism.

I know some of the people who indulged in these

vagaries very well. One of the latter is the mother of grown-up girls, and in all other matters of life a perfectly sane, sensible, and admirable woman. Her husband, a leading Socialist like herself, supported her, and was and is quite proud of her action. Another leading Socialist openly declared that he regarded the question of votes for women as more important than Socialism itself. Argument was quite useless, and was even regarded as offensive by the people to whom it was addressed. Their vigour and self-imposed martyrdom rendered women, to those who were caught in this tornado of hysterical futility, absolutely immune from criticism. It was monstrous to speak against them, cowardly not to sympathise with and support them. I saw and heard a good deal of this quite close at hand. What their view would have been if the two or three millions of men still unenfranchised had resorted to similar methods of enforcing their claims it is difficult to say. But I doubt if it would have met with the same tolerance.

It is no business of mine to argue out here the whole question of Anarchism and sabotage as a means of propaganda. I have always been vehemently opposed to it, and I am now—except in cases where free speech, freedom of the press, and right to combine are suppressed, when I consider that all forms of violence, assassination included, are perfectly justifiable. But in this case the women were winning, they had all the rights of agitation which men had secured for them by centuries of sacrifice, and the resort to such action was wholly unnecessary, and therefore unjustifiable.

But reason ceases to have any influence when passionate emotion is roused; and the forcible feeding business has undoubtedly produced a great effect on men, because—there is the funny part of

the matter—it has been applied to women! If it had been only men who had been thus kept from reaching the point where nature would have herself led to the demand for food, there would not have been any strong feeling about the matter at all.

What, however, I regard as the most unfortunate part of the whole agitation is that many of the women who have gone into it have given up those important social matters, specially affecting their sex, in which they could have rendered the very greatest service. Thus, at the present moment, as for many a long year past, women are competing with men on a much lower standard of life, which, of course, means lower wages, in almost every department of industry. Such competition is increasing rapidly, to the disadvantage of both women and men. It is one of the worst features of our modern industrial society; for in many ways it tends to injure not only the present but the next generation. And the overwhelming majority of these women are wholly unorganised to resist employers or to restrict competition among themselves. In fact, they have to rely upon the men to defend them against the results of their own weakness.

Moreover, in Lancashire and many parts of Yorkshire the abominable sweating of their own children as half-timers is upheld by the mothers themselves; though this bringing in of the children into the mills and factories not only tends to reduce the wages of the adults, but is also injurious to the children's vitality, and cuts at the very root of a sound national physique. It is on such points as these that women of the educated class who are so enthusiastic about the suffrage could be immensely useful. But since the suffrage movement became all-important to them, they have

nearly all, from Mrs. Pankhurst and her daughters onwards, abandoned this very important work.

Yet the time is fully ripe for organised effort in that direction, and attempts at improvement on their part would relieve the Suffragettes from the damaging attacks of Miss Violet Markham on this very point. Here, as in other directions, industrial and political work should surely go hand in hand. It is impossible, in my opinion, that either should succeed by itself if divorced from the other, under the conditions of our time, and I consider it a great mistake of the militant Suffragists that, apart from their methods, they should have laid themselves open justly to the imputation that they prefer sex equality in politics to sex and child emancipation in economics. Nevertheless, mistaken as they may be in their tactics, I heartily wish men representatives of the working class would show even a fraction of their vigour and determination in regard to the affairs of their daily social life.

And there is something else. Here am I, not, I believe, usually regarded as addicted to cowardice, except by some fraternal Socialists of the Independent Labour Party, such as Mr. Ramsay Macdonald and Mr. Philip Snowden, downright afraid to discuss in earnest a subject which, if prudishly tabooed, renders any sound, not to say reasonable, solution of the relations between the sexes impossible. Many years ago I was guilty of the unspeakable audacity of delivering a series of addresses upon "Woman"—only that, and nothing more!—in the hall of the old Social-Democratic Federation at 337 Strand. These were the lectures, by the way, attended by the famous American advocate of temperance, Miss Frances Willard, who, at the close of them, joined our party. I was lecturing, I say, with that genial imprudence which my friends tell me, in confidence, is my leading

characteristic, on "Woman," and permitting, as we always do, questions and discussion at the end of the address. I expected to be "heckled"; for what the brilliant Henri de Marsay stated in fiction, I, at the age of seventy, hereby reaffirm in fact—"I have studied them all my life, and if I were to tell you all I know, I should not tell you much"—I refer you to Balzac for the epigram that followed—and my lack of comprehension was doubtless manifest to my auditors. But that which I did not foresee as usual occurred. At the close of one address a handsome and able lady, whom I have since learnt to know well, and who has done admirable work for her own sex as well as for Socialism, arose and flung with all her force an explosive hand-grenade right into my midriff: "Do you not think, Mr. Hyndman, that one of the greatest curses of society is love?"

Just read that through again and imagine yourself to be a strenuous lecturer, full of earnestness and running over with zeal, waiting with timidity to be questioned, but hardly prepared to be "bombed" right off. "Do you not think, Mr. Hyndman, that one of the greatest curses of society is love?" It something dashed me: it gave me pause. I thought of St. Paul to the Corinthians and his eulogy of love. Romeo and Juliet, Heloise and Abelard, Francesca and her lover floating through space, all rushed through my brain in a few seconds. I even felt a little inclined to laugh; but that relief to my shattered nerves I could not permit myself to indulge in. I merely confessed in all meekness and humility that I had never looked at love from that point of view. Neither, to judge from the attitude of the audience, had any one else present, man or woman.

But my questioner, on being challenged, explained fully what she meant. And, as she put it, the theory which Miss Margaret Macmillan thus

negatively propounded was by no means so baseless, and certainly not in any way so laughable, as when heard thus suddenly propounded without a word of warning. Briefly and forcibly Miss Macmillan pointed out that throughout the history of what we call civilisation woman as a sex had been the victim of her softer disposition and more self-sacrificing nature where her heart was involved, and that love had been habitually made use of by man as a veneer for much grosser emotions. This was not merely a matter of economic inferiority as some Socialists were in the habit of arguing, but of the trading upon the higher qualities of woman by the coarser but more immediately powerful faculties of man to maintain her permanently on a lower plane.

"Love," in fact, had been employed by man against woman as a tremendous psychological weapon, in the half-disguised but wholly active sex warfare, to ensure the subjugation and even the degradation of woman; over and above the domestic enslavement to which her physiological disabilities have condemned her, at any rate since the institution of private property and the establishment of the man-controlled family and home. That was the position taken up by Miss Macmillan, and it is a thesis which she may since have worked out. That it is well worth consideration at a period when all our social and ethical arrangements are obviously going into the melting-pot is, I think, clear.

I had myself pointed out, following, of course, upon Lewis H. Morgan and others, that so long as women were collectively in control of the gentile communal home and even much later; so long even as property and inheritance and rank were determined by the status of the mother in the semi-communal tribal society which followed, as is the

case in many parts of the world to-day; women held a far higher position relatively to the men of the tribe than that which they occupy under modern conditions, and especially under direct Christian property-marriage. And this in nowise runs counter to the view that even man-made law in England may be more considerate of women than of men. That is a mere concession by superiority to weakness, not certainly an admitted equality due to social services rendered, which then adapts itself to the less powerful characteristics of the female sex. It is precisely this which the advanced women resent. They recognise that they are not the same as men but that they are complementary to them and have a right to perfect equality on that ground.

What I object to in the Woman Suffrage movement is that, as already said, they carefully leave not only the economic but the sexual sacrifice of their sisters entirely on one side. In their eagerness for political equality for the educated and well-to-do of their sex they disregard the economic and social disabilities to which alike the majority of women, the working wage-earners, and the minority of women, those of so-called loose life, are subjected. Yet this last is a degradation which can only be effectively removed by the efforts of women.

There is no similar class or section among men. That portion of the sex is deliberately embruted by society now, under Christianity, as it was for thousands of years under paganism, in order to maintain the virtue of the rest. Yet the very same women who so furiously denounce men for their unfairness and brutality are altogether indifferent to this social blot upon their "equality," are quite contented to accept St. Augustine's cynical summary of the position as sound, or even

go so far as to throw the whole responsibility for this convenient accompaniment of simple property-marriage, unknown in communal life and even among the Mormons, upon men.

I hold, however, that the revolt of woman, though so far to a great extent unconscious, and aiming therefore mostly at unessentials, will be forced alike by its own impetus and by the concurrent work and criticism of Socialists, to go a very great deal farther than is at present contemplated by the hysterical but self-sacrificing minority of fanatics who at present are in control. Already they have been compelled to expand their demand from fine-lady suffrage to universal adult suffrage by pressure from without. At the same time, and quite independently of any effort of theirs, equal pay of women for equal work with men is being enacted by public bodies. Simultaneously, the break-up of the home, upon which we English pride ourselves, is making itself manifest in all the manufacturing districts, and the contrast between free love and compulsory love is being recognised for the hypocritical nonsense that it is. I am hopeful, therefore, that ere long the revolt of woman will take a much more serious and therefore formidable shape than it has adopted at present, and will abandon its ignorant and irritating Anarchism for a thoroughgoing programme of scientific democracy and social revolution. A few Clara Zetkins in England and America would soon breathe a new and more capable spirit into the well-meaning women who, in their craze for mere political enfranchisement as an end, lose sight of the most important evils which afflict their sex. I am ready to admit, however, that even misguided stir is better than highly intelligent apathy.

Meanwhile, we have only to study the position of unmarried girls of the well-to-do class in other

countries and to compare it with that which they hold in England, America, and the English Colonies, to understand how far the movement has already gone in English-speaking territory in relation to that class. It is high time, indeed, that at least equal freedom should be obtained for women of all classes.

CHAPTER XIII

W. T. STEAD

The sad and even terrible end of W. T. Stead in the disaster of the *Titanic* naturally caused every one to speak kindly of his memory. But Stead is too remarkable a figure in the history of English journalism to be left to the tender mercies of funeral flattery. I have before spoken of the unpleasing impression he produced upon me when I first met him at dinner on his coming to London from Darlington, in company with Lord Morley, Mr. Andrew Lang, Sir John Robinson, and our host, Mr. Yates Thompson. I saw a good deal of Stead from time to time for a few years after that, and he made a wholly unique position for himself. He first introduced the practice of interviewing for the newspapers into the English press, and in some respects bettered his American instructors. That, as Sir Walter Scott said of himself when narrating another man's story, he "put a cocked hat and a sword" on every such bit of special reporting he did cannot be disputed, but his narrative certainly gained in picturesqueness what it lost in photographic accuracy. The interviewed victims lived in his account of them, and he took good care that the portrait of Stead should live too.

As editor he made his paper a platform for vigorous daily preachment by quite unusual methods.

He existed upon active sensationalism and vigorous exaggeration. He, so to say, caught his public by the beard and bellowed or shrieked his convictions for the day into its ear. People might kick, but they must hear. Whether it happened to be the need for a strong navy, or the innumerable virtues of Russia and her Czar, with the splendid work of civilisation they were doing in the East and on the Afghan frontier more particularly, or the glories of a possible Nonconformist Pope, with a vision of the Vatican as W. T. S.'s continental villa, or the splendid work of the Salvation Army and its sweating-shops, or the pressing need for protecting the maidens of modern Babylon from the outrageous vices of the respectable bourgeois, it was all given out to the world on Sarah Jane's top note. There was no mistaking what Stead meant to tell you, but after the first few sentences had been dinned into the ears of any sensitive person an irresistible longing for the sounds to be conveyed from a greater distance, or through two stout plugs of cotton wool, came upon the most eager for information.

Stead's methods of obtaining and parading information were at times as peculiar as they were boisterous in expression. I believe the man to have been strictly honest. Flattery and admiration might win him but not cash. Yet at the time of the Penjdeh incident in Afghanistan he displayed such minute knowledge in his paper of the movements of the Russian troops in that far-off locality, and treated his readers with such appalling accuracy to the names of the very captains of the sotnias of Kossacks employed, that, upon his stigmatising another journal as a catchpenny sheet, that organ referred to retorted by speaking of Stead's paper as "our catchrouble contemporary," and all the London world of journalism was glad.

Again, when he gave detailed descriptions of unseemly misdoings in his "Maiden Tribute" outburst which astounded the dwellers in our metropolis, a well-known member of the *Pall Mall Gazette* staff was earnestly entreating a still better-known member of the Garrick Club, supposed to be versed in erotic literature, to put him in the way of obtaining a copy of the Marquis de Sade's horrible *Justine et Juliette* for the purpose of getting up "local colour." All was fish that came to Stead's net at such times, and such a trifling matter as good taste never arrested his pen for a moment. But there could be no doubt about the effectiveness of his style for the purpose to which it was devoted, and his industry was as marked as his literary vigour was startling. His descriptions were at times extraordinarily vivid.

Nobody ever gave such an account of the Passion Play as he did. At the time of writing, the play was the actual drama of Jerusalem itself: none the less real to him, and for the time being to you, because the whole story might be a well-invented legend. Palestine and Switzerland also became so inextricably mixed up in the course of the narrative that it would have been quite easy to imagine, on the one hand, that the Crucifixion really took place on an Alpine peak in the distance, and that the Magdalen was a Swiss damsel of easy morals come over from Geneva to mourn for the departure from this life of a benefactor who had diverged from the path of harmless vice into that of commonplace homicide, and was meeting his just reward up there above the snow-line; or, on the other, that the whole company of Swiss peasants were really carrying out the entire scene amid the sunburnt surroundings of Syria, and this was in truth the Son of God, with the two thieves by his side, and his mother, the soldiery, and the apostles gathered at

the foot of the torturing cross awaiting the final agony. Stead, like Tertullian, was a firm believer in what he knew to be incredible, and the ardour of his enforced conviction breathed itself into his style.

For myself, I never could stand the man. His mind, his ethic, his manners, his methods, alike revolted me. He was that not uncommon variety of self-conscious ascetic, a Puritan chock-full of guile, and in his way utterly unscrupulous. At one moment when we were at odds with the Tory Government, and it was quite possible serious trouble would come of it, Stead took, or pretended to take, our side, and undoubtedly did us some good. We all of us thought he meant what he said, and that in all good faith he did what he did. Not a bit of it. The whole affair was carried on, so far as he was concerned, for the greater glory of himself and his newspaper. The night before the great meeting in Trafalgar Square he published an article obviously meant to do the Socialists as much harm as possible, because it might advertise his journal. I told him as plainly as I could, and I am not troubled with stammering in my speech, what I thought of him, but he took my objurgations in what he called a truly Christian spirit. I wished he had not at the time.

And yet I am bound to admit that in the matter of the Boer War he behaved as well as any man could. It was dead against his interest in every way to act as he did: not only against his pecuniary interest by nearly ruining his own *Review of Reviews* and heading off his means of making money in other ways, but in deadly opposition to his own personal regard and admiration for Cecil Rhodes. Stead possessed that, to me, unintelligible respect for successful money-getters and capable men of business which some journalists and men of letters are plagued with. What is utterly contemptible in a petty

larceny thief becomes for them glorified sagacity in a monumental scoundrel.

Of course, Rhodes was by no means the worst of his tribe, and he stands out to-day as a hero, when compared with such scurvy specimens of humanity as the South African millionaires, who are nowadays kind enough to run horses and high society for our benefit. Rhodes had besides really grandiose notions which, even when stripped of their millionaire gilding, might well impose upon a man like Stead, to whom thinking in continents had a sort of Napoleonic fascination,—the railway from Cape to Cairo; the British flag waving all over Africa; an English university awakened out of its torpor, and using its ancient and seductive influence for some higher object than to teach reaction and prop up rottenness. Each and all of these ideas might cause a much less impressionable person than Stead to feel that he was being brought into contact with a genius, even if that genius had been comparatively poor. But when the individual who gave utterance to them possessed a vast fortune, of which, in the cant phrase of our day, he himself had been the architect, why, then, Rhodes appeared to Stead as a very necromancer of modern English Imperialism: the one personage competent above all others to realise dreams which he had persuaded himself were worthy of prompt realisation in fact.

But Stead, to do him justice, never hesitated a moment when the choice lay between supporting the war and breaking his close friendship with Rhodes and his imperial aspirations. It was as a strong opponent of Mr. Chamberlain's policy and all that it represented that I was again thrown into contact with Mr. Stead. As he really was fighting, and fighting hard, on the right side, we Social-Democrats let bygones be bygones, and protected his meetings for him, when his own folk thought

peaceful persuasion would save him from the assaults of infuriated jingoes. It is my conviction, which he shared, that our people were the means of preserving him from really serious injury at Exeter Hall. Meeting Stead in the street he told me how very much obliged to us he felt for thus standing by him, and he wrote a letter to our organisation expressing his thanks more formally. But in his opposition to all wars, and not merely to this war in particular, he was, I believe, perfectly genuine. Moreover, his belief that an overwhelmingly powerful navy at our disposal tended to keep peace was, I hold, perfectly sound. There was no contradiction whatever between this view and his habitual pacifism. For a great power to tempt attack by weakness is to incite to war, as things stand to-day, and this must be the opinion of the Nöbel Trustees, or they never would have decided, had he lived, to accord to him the Nöbel Prize for his advocacy of peace and a big navy at the same time.

When the Italians made their unprovoked attack upon Tripoli Mr. Stead wrote to me and asked me to take part in meetings, and in arranging an organised agitation against their policy. This, although he certainly had no love for the unspeakable Turk. I held much the same opinion as he did about the unjustifiable character of the Italian campaign, but I had plenty of other work to do at the time, and I was not inclined to mix myself up with a somewhat hypocritical form of protestation, as I thought, when we ourselves are pretty constantly at the same game in Asia and elsewhere. Besides, I did not care to associate myself with Mr. Stead's pacifist set, who were all of them as anti-Socialist at bottom as he was himself. And much opposed as any really sane man must be to war between nations, it is obvious that the wars of to-day are in the main capitalist wars; that, moreover, the class

war in peace in every country is far more horrible than even the military war abroad. But this Stead would never see, and thought the Hague Arbitration Court was of far greater importance to mankind than all the work of the Socialists. His laudation, also, of the Czar, the Kaiser, the Pope, in fact of anybody who held an autocratic position and used it, rendered close co-operation impossible.

In short, Stead was, altogether, an extraordinary character, and probably the mistake I made about him was to take him too seriously. A man with a modern witch of Endor constantly at his elbow in the shape of his "Julia" advising him as to his every action, and keeping himself and his friends posted as to their material, as well as their psychical, salvation, was obviously somewhat deranged. His beliefs, too, were curiously mixed. Providence for him was queerly composted of Jehovah and Oliver Cromwell. He would kotow to Nicholas of Russia, but it was a perennial source of joy to him that Charles I. involuntarily parted from his head. The second window on the main floor of Whitehall was sacred to him by reason of the fact that through it "the man Charles Stuart" stepped on to the scaffold to be permanently shortened. How he reconciled this rather stringent form of persuasion with his vehement advocacy of peace I never could make out; though I asked him more than once to give me his explanation. My own view of him now is that his mind was not at all consecutive. It moved by kangaroo leaps. But the nonconformist taint he had inherited and cultivated showed itself in all its various manifestations. That and a marked tendency to mountebank methods even when alone.

I called to see him one day, and he came in suddenly with a dingy, yellowish-brown suit on, marked all over with the broad arrow, and a queer-

shaped cap, similarly decorated, on his head. I asked him jokingly if he was going to a fancy ball as a criminal lunatic? He then told me that this day was the anniversary of his imprisonment on account of the Maiden Tribute business, and that he made it a practice to appear in this garb by way of remembrance every year on that date. I suggested that a complete cropping of his hair would be still more likely to impress the matter upon his visitors, and even upon himself.

Stead's fine end in the midst of all the muddle and mismanagement of the terrible disaster to the *Titanic* showed that below all his self-advertisement and charlatanry was a cool courage and self-sacrifice which all must admire.

CHAPTER XIV

SOCIALISM IN THE UNITED STATES

If we had kept silent the stones would have cried out. Children were being slain, women worked to death, men killed inch by inch, and these crimes are never punished by law. The great principle underlying the present system is unpaid labour. Those who amass fortunes, build palaces, and live in luxury are doing that by virtue of unpaid labour. Being directly or indirectly in possession of all the land and machinery they dictate their terms to the working man. He is compelled to sell his labour cheap or to starve. The price paid him is always far below its real value. He acts under compulsion and they call it free contract. This state of affairs keeps him poor and ignorant, an easy prey for exploitation. I know what life has in store for the masses. I was one of them. I slept in their garrets and lived in their cellars. I saw them work and die. I worked with girls in the same factory—prostitutes they were, because they could not earn wages enough to live. I saw females sick from overwork, sick in body and mind on account of the lives they were forced to lead. I saw girls from ten to fourteen years of age working for a mere pittance. I heard how their morals were killed by the foul and vile language and the bad example of their ignorant fellow-workers, leading them on to the same road of misery. I saw families starving and able-bodied men worked to death. That was in Europe.

When I came to the United States, I found that there were classes of working men who were better paid than the European workmen, but I perceived that the state of things in a great number of industries was even worse, and that the so-called better-paid skilled labourers were being rapidly degraded into mere automatic appendages to the machinery. I found that the proletariat of the great industrial cities was in

a condition that could not be worse. Thousands of labourers in the city of Chicago live in rooms without sufficient protection from the weather, without proper ventilation, where never a stream of sunlight flows in. There are hovels where two, three, and four families live in one room. How these conditions influence the health and morals of these unfortunate sufferers it is needless to say. And how do they live? From the ash-barrels they gather half-rotten vegetables, in the butchers' shops they buy offal for a few cents, and these precious morsels they carry home to make their meals from. The dilapidated tenements in which labourers of this class live need repairs very badly, but the greedy landlord waits in most cases till he is compelled by the city to have them done. Is it any wonder that diseases of all kinds kill men, women, and children in such places by wholesale, especially children? Is not this horrible in a so-called civilised country, where there is plenty of food and wealth?

Some years ago a committee of the Citizens' Association or League made an investigation into these matters, and I was one of the reporters who went with them. What these common labourers are to-day, the skilled labourers will be to-morrow. Improved machinery, which ought to be a blessing for the working man, becomes a curse for him. Machinery multiplies the army of unskilled labourers and makes the labourer himself more and more dependent upon the class who own the land and the machines. And that is the reason why Socialism and Communism have got a foothold in this country. The outcry that Socialism, Communism, and Anarchism are the creed of foreigners is a great mistake. There are more Socialists of American birth in the United States than foreigners, and that is much when we consider that nearly half of all the industrial working men are not native Americans. There are Socialist papers in a great many States written and edited by Americans for Americans. Socialism, as we understand it, means that land and machinery shall be held in common by the people. The production of goods shall be carried on by co-operative groups of producers who will supply the needs of all the people. Under such a system every human being would have the opportunity for doing useful work, and no doubt would do such useful work. A few hours' work every day would suffice to produce all that is needed for a full and enjoyable existence. Statistics establish that. Ample time would be

left for all to cultivate the mind and to foster science and art. That is what Socialists propose.

Some say it is un-American. Is it then American to let people starve and die in their ignorance? Is exploitation of the labourer and robbery of the poor American? What have the great political parties done for the poor? Promised much: done nothing except corrupt them by buying their votes on the day of election. A poverty-stricken man has no interest in the welfare of the community. It is but natural that in a society where women sell their honour men should sell their votes. . . . I have not the slightest idea who threw the bomb on the Haymarket, and had no knowledge of any conspiracy to use violence on that or any other night.

That is an extract from the speech of Schwab when about to be condemned to death for participation in bomb-throwing in Chicago six-and-twenty years ago. This trial and the execution of the "Anarchists," after twelve months of respite, is now generally admitted to have been nothing more nor less than a police plot, carried out to gratify the hatred of the dominant class in Chicago, and throughout the United States, against those who preached and agitated for the overthrow of capitalism. Spies, Parsons, Fischer, Engel, and Lingg, who were hanged, and Fielden and Schwab, who were imprisoned for fifteen years, were as much the victims of an atrocious system of government as the members of the first Russian Duma who have been done to death in Russia for no crime whatever. But the whole thing, like the massacres after the Commune of Paris, is no more than an incident in the long and desperate class war in which the killed and wounded are all on one side.

The mistake made by Fischer, Engel, and Lingg, and, to a much less extent by Spies and Parsons, was in talking big about their power to do this, that, and the other by main force, when they could have had no hope of success by this means. From

talking of bombs as weapons to using bombs to kill is no long step, and people at large are not quick to discriminate between Anarchists and Social-Democrats; though their theories are directly antagonistic, and leading Anarchists are never weary of abusing and misrepresenting Social-Democrats. At any rate, we English Social-Democrats did all we possibly could to save the accused and condemned men, and a petition to the Governor of Illinois which we drew up was signed by some of the most distinguished people in Great Britain. Public meetings of protest were also held. All to no purpose.

The main point in relation to the speech of Schwab, as well as with regard to the death orations of his fellow-prisoners, is that there is practically no change for the better in the conditions of the workers of Chicago since 1886; as is proved conclusively by official evidence in America, and by investigations conducted on the spot by Mr. Adolphe Smith, the Special Commissioner of the *Lancet*. Things move so slowly indeed that the following analysis of American social and political affairs which I wrote more than a quarter of a century ago is absolutely correct to-day.

Men have come and gone, but the domination of capitalism remains what it was. All our efforts on this side to save the Anarchists of Chicago from the scaffold were renewed but the other day on behalf of Haywood and his two fellow Trade Unionists, and may be called for again to-morrow in order to help to ensure the safety of Ettor and Giovanetti, the leaders of the foreign workers of Lawrence against unendurable oppression. In spite of Socialist energy and Mr. Roosevelt's see-saw political dodgery things still move slowly in the United States, as they do in Great Britain; though, as I point out below, the people have

advantages which are lacking in England, and the American Socialist leaders I have met during the past thirty years have been by no means wanting in persistence and self-sacrifice. These advantages may still be fairly put as follows :—

1. The workers are on the whole better educated than the European wage-earners outside Germany. They study more and keep themselves better informed as to what is going on among their class and take a more active interest in social matters. They go to lectures and public meetings to a greater extent than ours do, and act more quickly on what they learn.

2. The facts and figures relating to the trades and industries of the United States are more accurate, better arranged, and more accessible to the people than elsewhere. The artisans and labourers in any branch of production can see clearly what proportion of the total value goes to the labourers, and how much is taken by capitalists and landlords. The question whether wages are or are not rising relatively to the cost of living is easily determined. The workers can see for themselves how they are faring with their employers more clearly than they can here.

3. The standard of life is generally higher in America, but not so high as used to be claimed by any means, and the similarity of the conditions of the lower strata to those which obtain in Europe is generally observed.

4. It is more and more difficult for a man to rise out of the wage-earning class.

5. The personal relation between employer and employed is less even than it is in Europe. Tramps are frequently treated with frightful cruelty. The police are far more brutal and corrupt in the great cities than they are on this side of the Atlantic.

6. The capitalists are harsher in their dealings

and more obviously a separate class than elsewhere. They are not absorbed into an old class whose wealth is hereditary, nor is there even yet a large easy class not directly engaged in business to show off the increasing antagonism. The feeling against the growing Trusts and monopolies is very keen.

7. The contrast between the nominal social and political equality and the real disparity which exist between the rich man and the poor man—the utter helplessness of the latter, though he is told he is all-powerful when he sees himself juggled out of any real influence—increases the bitterness in times of pressure. There is a growing appreciation of the irony of the situation when the gulf between the extremely wealthy and the wretchedly poor is widening every day. What is the use, a man asks himself, of being a free and independent citizen of the great Republic when I can barely keep body and soul together in good times and am thrown out starving on the streets in bad, while Trusts, Companies, and private employers control the whole machine? The tone of American political literature, from the Declaration of Independence onwards, is one continuous satire upon the economic and social conditions of to-day. Formerly, when "the frontier" still lay open to the hardy and adventurous, and all felt they had a chance, this contrast between the word and the fact was not so much noticed: now it is felt and commented upon daily.

8. The political issues are really played out. These used to serve, in the United States as in older countries, to obscure the actual conflict of class interest which underlies them all. That is now almost at an end. There is little to choose between Republicans and Democrats. Even the Free Trade and Protection issue rouses lukewarm interest. Mere grabbing for place, thinly veneered over by a pretence of patriotism, has become too

clearly the object of both factions. This among a people so intensely political as the Americans is a serious matter. That the labouring classes are still almost wholly unrepresented or grossly misrepresented in the political arena by no means lessens the significance of this point.

9. Americans are much more ready to resort to the use of arms than are Europeans. The capitalist class is better prepared for an armed struggle than is perhaps generally recognised, and at any moment such deliberate outrages upon justice and freedom as have occurred in Colorado and recently in San Diego may force on a direct conflict.

10. The widespread corruption not only in the political circles of the Capital but in the State Legislatures and Municipalities, and the utter hopelessness as matters stand of getting any proposals seriously considered which affect the welfare of great masses of men but which conflict with the views of the great monopolists, are, unfortunately as I think, driving many workers to the conclusion that "direct action" outside politics, even without long and careful preparation, is their only hope. Confidence has been shaken in the whole machinery of government.

11. The Constitution of the United States is built up upon the abstract eighteenth-century principles of individual liberty for all citizens and so on, and it is to these principles that reference is made in case of difficulty. As I wrote so long ago as 1880, with special reference to America: "Full individual freedom leads, under present economic conditions, to monopoly; that monopoly speedily develops into oppression and tyranny; and then the common sense of society, as a whole, has to step in to correct the mischief which has been allowed to grow up." There is no constitutional provision for this in America.

This, I admit, is all rather general reflection than particular reminiscence. But the course of events in America is worthy of more attention than we in Great Britain are in the habit of giving to it. Very much depends, of course, upon the point of view taken. Quite recently, for instance, my friend Professor Herron, who drafted the manifesto eight years ago upon which the combination of the Socialist Party was based, and has since been compelled by exigencies of health to watch the development of the working-class movement in the United States from the charming vantage-post of Florence, revisited America. He felt much disappointed at what he saw. This perhaps was natural. Herron, thoroughgoing Socialist as he is, has certain drawbacks, which, I think, all of us "intellectuals" more or less suffer from.

We see the horrors of the existing system so clearly and present to ourselves the beauties of the coming Co-operative Commonwealth in such attractive guise that we are apt not to make sufficient allowance for the time element in such a tremendous social transformation as that which we believe to be inevitable. Though the conscious human element may, when conditions are ready, precipitate a catastrophe, in such wise as to make it appear to be the sudden outburst of unexpected forces, the essential, unconscious, automatic development takes a long period to reach that stage, even after capable lookers-on think the moment for the complete change has come. The education of the public mind to any new conceptions is a wearisome business, calling for an amount of slow, persistent, unseen effort which makes no show and the effect of which only manifests itself at intervals, except in countries where education and organisation are exceptionally good and industrialism has

simultaneously advanced to a high point. Moreover, it is in the nature of the case that as ideas spread the presentation of them becomes more commonplace. The average of intelligence rises, but leaders no longer stand out ahead of and almost apart from the general body, focusing in their writings, speeches, and even persons the inspiring ideals of the coming time.

In discussing Socialist affairs at home and abroad, I have often expressed my own disappointment that, as the recruiting-ground expands, the standard of the voluntary conscripts seems to be lowered, and the fine idealism of the earlier days, with its clear-cut practical programme of immediate change, promulgated by men and women who had all the vehement enthusiasm of religious fanatics, is submerged under a flood of inconsequent and provoking practicality, or is obscured by still more irritating upheavals for purposes of no great moment. Yet this, after all, is mere unscientific impatience and educated intolerance of what the intellectual person regards as commonplace.

The great work of the world in all directions is commonplace. And the fact that Socialism is entering into everyday life and is being discussed, accepted, and adopted by ordinary everyday people is of very much more importance than whether this or that speech or lecture is perfect in form, or whether such a pamphlet or book is distinguished in style. The important point is whether the standard of intelligence and appreciation taken over the whole community has risen. First-rate oratory and admirable style will always be exceptional. But the most serious departments of human thought and attainment are destitute of both the one and the other. There is no eloquence in the multiplication table or the differential calculus, and the finest style in all history would not save a

second-rate chemist from failure. The truth is, we Socialists have passed out of the period of high theoretical and even practical idealism, and have not yet reached the era of constructive idealism.

Meanwhile, mankind, more and more influenced every day by collectivist and Socialist opinion, is plodding its way through all sorts of provoking blunders to the point where it will have learnt by experience what to do. And all that those who see, or think they see, farther along the road ahead than the most of their fellows, can achieve in the way of rendering help, is to keep on teaching unceasingly the basic truths of the Socialist faith. That is, in the main, the answer I make to my friend Herron's temporary pessimism about progress in America. For in no country in the world is it more true that the average of the Socialist army has improved in height, girth, depth, and stature than it is in America.

I have met at one time or another most of the most active men and women Socialists in the United States, with the exception of Eugene Debs, and in my opinion, quite irrespective of their antagonisms, recriminations, and mutual depreciations,—"conscious as we are of one another's shortcomings," American Socialists might say, as the late Lord Justice Bowen suggested for the preamble to a formal letter of congratulation by the English judges to Queen Victoria,—they have a number of speakers and writers quite equal on the average to those who are to be found in any other country.

Debs stands out as the prominent figure, and is worthy of the position, for assuredly no man anywhere has worked harder for the cause, has run greater risks, or has used his extraordinary energy and impressive oratory to better account. People are apt to forget in the Debs who has

been three times the Socialist candidate for the Presidency, and the active speaker and writer all over the Union, that he fought as a simple worker one of the very hardest and most dangerous fights for the railway men that have ever been carried on, went to gaol for his opinions, and might easily have fallen a victim to the hatred of the capitalist class.

His position now, though he is a much younger man, is not very different from that of August Bebel. He is accepted, that is to say, as the most prominent and most trusted man of the whole Socialist party, and this is the more remarkable because he, like his forerunner in Germany, has never trimmed his sails in order to court support in any way, but has remained throughout the thoroughgoing champion of out-and-out Socialism; maintaining that no matter what small advantages might be gained in the meantime, only the complete destruction of the wages system can be of any advantage to the mass of mankind.

So little is known in Europe of the American movement, that a leading French journal classed Eugene Debs with John Burns and Millerand as a man who had abandoned the class for which he had striven. I at once wrote to defend Debs from this disgraceful imputation, and sent him a copy of the correspondence. He was naturally angry enough that he should be thus traduced, and thanked me warmly for having set forth the truth. I am told that the impression Debs produces upon his audiences is much greater than that made by any other American speaker, and that his "personal magnetism" is amazing. He was invited a little while ago to deliver a series of addresses in England in conjunction with the British Socialist Party, and after the Presidential Election is over it is more than probable he will come.

But though Debs is a remarkable personality and his popularity is unbounded, he is still, as he himself takes a delight in telling the people, only one of the crowd. But that crowd is really a remarkable crowd. Among them may be counted (without thinking) a whole series of writers who have made a name on both sides of the Atlantic, and who are active workers in the Socialist ranks. Markham, Jack London, English Walling, Spargo, Upton Sinclair, Robert Hunter, La Monte, Mrs. Charlotte Gilman Stetson, Simons, and others would do credit to any party. This is a very different state of things from the time when almost the only organised Socialists in the United States were Germans, who kept very much to themselves and spoke only their own language; when Schevitch, whose sad tragedy with Countess Hatzfeldt has recently attracted so much attention, was the only really vigorous orator whom they could rely upon for debate in English; and when, to the great majority even of educated Americans, Socialism and Anarchism were convertible terms. Schevitch was one of the handsomest men as well as one of the ablest orators who ever stood upon a platform, and I have never understood why he left New York just when the long uphill work of himself and others was beginning to have a serious effect, and the party for which he had striven was manifestly destined to have a great influence upon American affairs.

Of speakers there is almost a glut. From one end of the country to the other, not only the large cities, towns, but even the smaller industrial centres are constantly visited by Socialist speakers; north, south, east, and west being organised in groups under a most effective central control. It is doubtful whether this department of Socialist propaganda is so well arranged anywhere else, while

even daily papers in English are being kept up in New York, Chicago, and Milwaukee.

It was at the time when Schevitch was active that Gaylord Wilshire, who has since earned for himself a widespread unpopularity among American Socialists by inducing them to embark in unfortunate mines, and has now "gone Syndicalist"—equivalent to "going Fanti"—did really wonderful work in Los Angeles and California with his *Challenge* and his candidatures, the results of which are seen to-day in the extraordinarily heavy Socialist vote for Job Harriman as municipal candidate. Harriman polled two-fifths of the entire vote of the great city of Los Angeles last year, in spite of the terrible exposure of the Anarchist methods of the brothers Macnamara, which was made just at that time, and unquestionably deprived him of a very fair chance of winning right out. At Beverley, a University town, with an exceptionally well-to-do population, Socialism swept the decks.

Whole districts, where Wilshire and his friends had taken up an apparently hopeless task, and had sown the seed more than twenty years before, blossomed out into a most encouraging harvest. It was at this period of the early nineties also, that Wilshire, foreseeing the futility of attempting to limit the gigantic monopolies which were growing up inevitably, and, from the economic point of view, advantageously, out of unrestricted competition and the development of capital in its higher stages, raised the cry for the first time of "Let the Nation own the Trusts." It was a plain, simple proposal, which became the easier to comprehend and take up the more closely it was looked into. Of course, it was derided when originally formulated; but there is probably no single phrase which has had so great a share in stirring up Americans to the appreciation of collectivism and Socialism as this. "Let the

Nation own the Trusts." Let the educated democracy of the United States use their power in their own interest: let them absorb the absorbers, and organise the organisers for the mass of the people instead of against them. Surely a more telling "cry" to-day than ever, when at least 55 to 60 per cent of all American industry is under the absolute control of the Trusts, and their ruthless power pervades the entire country.

We have plenty of Trusts in Great Britain, if we would only look at facts instead of names; but the iron-and-steel trustifiers, the coal trustifiers, the cotton trustifiers, the railway trustifiers, the shipping trustifiers, etc., have lain low, and the silly Liberal, Tory, and Labourist workers and their leaders perpetually tell us there can be no Trusts, with their ruthless economic repression and wholesale corruption, in this freedom-loving, honest country. Lobbying is unknown in Old England, the House of Commons is beyond reproach, the Municipal Councils never have anything to conceal, the Public Departments, in particular the Board of Trade and the War Office, do not know what the word bribery means.

In short, we are all so just that the Standard Oil Company is dumping its low-flash oil on poor English people out of sheer charity, and obtains special rights of barge-transport up the Thames for its oil without paying a farthing for the privilege! It is a great thing to live in a community where hypocrisy covers such a multitude of virtues. In the United States they are less fortunate.

It is to Wilshire's credit that he saw the truth about the Trusts, not only theoretically but practically, long before others, and that first in the West, and then in the East, he never wearied of pushing his demand, "Let the Nation own the Trusts," on the platform and in the press. His

comments, too, for many years, on the everyday business of life, in the *Challenge*, and afterwards in his magazine, from the point of view of the ordinary business man were very useful as written by a Socialist. More of this sort of plain, convincing criticism ought to be forthcoming; and by this and by his debates, such as that with Professor Seligmann, he did admirable service. I take pleasure in recalling these facts now, when in America much of his work is obscured entirely by his own fault, and he has abandoned Socialism for a hopeless farrago of incompatibilities, which he declares to be "Syndicalism"—whatever that may mean.

Having known him intimately for a long time, I attribute this and other aberrations to the curious tricks he plays with his inner man. There is quite a large class of Americans who make not a god but an experiment-chamber of their belly. They give the poor thing no chance. Their science of nutrition appears to consist in the careful manufacture of chronic indigestion by confused feeding of a muddled sort, and then they parade the planet with patent foods, quack medicines and stomach pumps, seeking with marvellous ineptitude what not to devour. Joe Pullitzer, of the *New York World*, was one of these curious and rather laughable specimens of the man with an abraded mucous membrane and an œsophagus run to seed. How he kept his brain going with that unnourished body I never could make out. He put me in mind of a famous English judge, whose attractive luncheon used to consist of sugarless tapioca pudding and a pint of camomile tea. But Pullitzer, not content with having destroyed his own powers of assimilation, set to work to impair seriously those of others.

His relations to my friend, Thomas Davidson, the philosopher, recalled to me Walter Besant's

story of the old epicure, who, having arrived at the Wilshire stage of hopelessly imperfect deglutition, bought a healthy young man's digestive organs in order to accommodate his exquisite French dinners and delicious old wines. Davidson, though not young, was, when he took up with Pullitzer, undoubtedly a very healthy man. He had, I believe, been living, and possibly enjoying, the simple life and the complex thought, somewhere in the still unreclaimed backwoods of the Adirondack mountains. Unadulterated Aristotle and exiguous provender kept mind and body quite fit. The voyage across had still further invigorated him. So he looked.

Thus physically equipped he set out to sample the best flesh-pots of Europe and the finest *crus* of Southern France. He, as I say, accompanied Pullitzer, who would, or rather could, enjoy none of these things. The philosopher had entered upon some pernicious bargain to supplement the proprietor's incapacity—of that I am convinced—and it killed him. The dyspeptiac immolated the thinker by repletion, and himself lived undigesting on for many a long year. As to Wilshire, the last I heard of him was that he had fasted for three whole days and was then engaged in drinking some "wholesome" potation in quantity, which outdoes for sheer nastiness the "Kava" of Fiji many times over. I can answer for it he has tried every other cure ever invented, and has experimented in not a few of them on his friends. May his own private brand of Syndicalism flourish on such fare!

But in America, as here in Europe, it is not those who are most heard of who do the bulk of the spade work. I saw a portrait in the *International Socialist Review* the other day of the splendid old French propagandist, Sanials, with the remark below that he is too well known to

need any comment. That is not the case, I think. For ten thousand who have heard of the successful moderates, Berger or Hilquit, not one has been made acquainted with the fine, unadvertised career of the unwavering revolutionary agitator, Sanials. Possibly, also, the fact that he was closely associated with de Leon for many years, and shared and used his inexhaustible vocabulary of abuse for all Socialists who differed from his opinions, scarcely helped to keep his name to the front.

But for many a year Sanials did street-corner preaching and steady dissemination of Socialist literature under every sort of discouragement, and not unfrequently in dangerous circumstances. It was this unrecorded, unseen toil of the self-sacrificing enthusiast, who had no object in view but the ultimate success of a cause of which he could not expect himself to see the triumph, that has built up the Socialist Party in the United States as elsewhere. Sanials, in fact, in New York, like Jack Williams in London, represents a type. Some accident of popularity or persecution may bring such a man's name temporarily before the world; but, in the great majority of cases, he gets little or no credit for his unceasing and exhausting propaganda.

Sanials never changed his teachings, though he naturally enough found it necessary to vary his methods. From first to last he has told the workers and all who chose to listen to him, that until capitalism and production for profit, with the attendant wage-paying by one class to another and the appropriation of the product of unpaid labour by the owners of the means of making wealth, are entirely transformed into a co-operative industrial community, the wage-earners, as a class, could gain no permanent advantage. Then all classes would cease to be, and human beings would at last lead a rational

and enjoyable life. Education, agitation, and organisation of the whole people towards this end, and the acceptance of such changes as tended in that direction in the meanwhile, were the only effective methods of attaining the desired result, and politics or armed force or well-prepared and disciplined strikes were all to be used as reasonable opportunity might offer. All this Sanials hammered on at year after year, with uncommonly little to show for his pains. When Sanials visited London nearly twenty years ago, he was still in the camp of the economically sound but singularly vituperative section who followed the lead of de Leon; but it was quite clear from his conversation and his speeches that he was more concerned about the spread of Socialism than for the aggrandisement of any faction. He has had the gratification of seeing an influential party grow up in his day in his adopted country.

But it must be put to the credit of Socialists in the United States, as in other countries, that they have not only effectively criticised the economic and social and political conditions around them to such an extent as to compel even ambitious politicians to swing round on to the side of social reform — Roosevelt's agitation would have been quite impossible but for the long work of Socialists, though undoubtedly it is intended to check their advance—but a beginning has been made in the direction of dealing with the entire history of North America, aside from Mexico, from the point of view of the producing class. This is a very much more important matter than appears at first sight.

Even such works as those of de Tocqueville and Bryce do little more than record the progress of political forms and the development of political struggles from the point of view of the pseudo-

democracy of the economically dominant class. It is rather astonishing to any one who has not read de Tocqueville's book for many years to discover, on a reperusal, how much out of date all his admirably arranged and ably written survey is, as applied to the conditions of to-day. It is only valuable as illustrating a phase of cultured European thought at a particular epoch. Bryce's history, which, of course, is less philosophic, is not quite so much a "back number"; but the whole conception is that of the day before yesterday, in so far as it deals with the problems of the people and is not merely a record of occurrences, which, however significant they may be for the middle classes, have no special interest for the vast proletariat that has grown up in the Great Republic.

Yet these two books are on the whole the best foreign works on America. The domestic histories and carefully compiled annals for use in the schools, universities, and other places where they teach of the glories of the Stars and Stripes are, of course, intensely patriotic and by no means critical. Consequently, young men and young women coming out of American schools and colleges, though, as already said, better educated on the whole than the youth of any other nation except Germany, have nevertheless a whole mass of superincumbent ignorance, inherited from the past, to get rid of, before they can apprehend correctly how existing social conditions have developed to their present unstable and threatening stage. Generalities about the material conception of history and the inevitable horrors of the class war are mostly imported from Europe, and though very directly applicable to American affairs, necessarily fail to draw their illustrations, where given, from the facts of American development. Read down the list of the educational and agitatory

literature now so widely distributed at such cheap rates throughout the States, and it will be found that nearly the whole of it is either directly drawn from Europe, or is based upon the ideas, and even largely uses the phrases, thence derived.

The drawbacks to this state of things are obvious. Though native-born Americans at present constitute the overwhelming majority of the Socialist Party there has been lacking until lately any connected analysis in a compendious shape of the growth of the power which, from the very earliest days of the Colonies and the Republic, has overshadowed the nominal democracy upon which American citizens have prided themselves, and now, to use an Irishism, is overshadowing itself.

It is not enough in any nation that the leaders and advocates of the new social polity should denounce and expose the mischiefs of the present state of things, or even that they should prove that the coming transformation is inevitable, and point out the new forms which such changes must almost certainly bring with them. All this induction and hypothesis to be really sound, and to impress the thinking portion of the community, must be rooted in the past life of the particular country in which the movement is going forward. And nowhere is this more essential than in the United States, where the complications are quite phenomenal. Nothing like it has ever been seen before. Moreover, the extraordinary rapidity of the development in the last two generations cannot be paralleled outside Japan.

For these reasons I attached very great importance to *The American Farmer* by my friend A. M. Simons, when it first appeared some years ago. The book was too small, it was by no means well written—why the style of our Socialist friends

on the other side of the Atlantic should, as a rule, be so bad I cannot understand—it was clumsily printed and roughly got up. But it contained the root of the matter, and the general investigation of the agricultural development of the United States from the early days of colonisation onwards was, so far as I know, the first attempt made in this field to establish a consecutive record, with a guiding idea all through.

It threw a new light upon the whole story of American agriculture and the men who took part in it; put the slave-tilled and free-tilled areas in right relations to one another; proved that the most scandalous system of "land-grabbing" ever denounced in the Old Country found more than its equal under thoroughly democratic institutions; exposed the dealings of some of the most respected "fathers of the people," Franklin and Washington included, in these flagitious transactions; traced the free and independent American farmer out from the hard, ungrateful soil of the Northern States to the great rich tracts of the West, with the lengthening chain of capitalist advances and mortgages ever trailing after him; showed how the railways and the trusts dealt with the freedom of the freeholder, and the manner in which competition in agriculture told at the next stage in favour of monopoly; and furnished a useful introduction to the application of machinery to tillage (now being employed through the agency of motor-ploughs, motor-seeding machines, and motor harrows to introduce the earliest stages of agriculture into the arena of factory production for the first time); and in general brought the whole system of American farming within the scope and purview of modern scientific Socialism. I wrote what I thought about the book at the time of its publication and expressed the hope, as well in reviewing it as afterwards to

Simons personally, when we met in Europe, that he would devote himself to giving a still more thorough account of agriculture in the United States, and its influence on the world at large upon a much more extended scale.

Unfortunately, as so often happens in connection with Socialism, circumstances were such that Simons was obliged to give up work he could do admirably for other work he did less well. An able student and expositor, he became only a fairly good editor and organiser; leaving a department where he could have made, as I believe, a great and permanent impression for one in which his special qualities of research and comparison were almost valueless. Something similar has occurred with Professor Ettore Ciccotti, who after having given to the world a really fine monograph in *Il Tramonto della Schiavitu*, "The Downfall of Slavery," certainly the best historical study in ancient socio-economics of the past quarter of a century, went off in like manner to the less enduring daily task of Socialist propaganda and criticism. There was a time in the history of what has been well called the "Struggle for Emancipation of the Fourth Estate" when this sort of personal sacrifice was unavoidable: there was no one else to carry on the work. But it is so no longer, and when effort is better organised, men and women of exceptional capacity will be able to find suitable outlets for their faculties.

In the meantime, Mr. Simons has brought out another book entitled *Social Forces in American History*, which, though lacking the freshness of his earlier work, is nevertheless a worthy contribution to the annals of North American development. By far the most valuable part of the work, which is somewhat lopsided and ends much too abruptly, is that portion of it which shows clearly that the

Civil War arose neither from any general aversion from negro slavery as an institution, nor in the first instance from any devoted adhesion to the Union, as is still commonly believed on this side of the Atlantic. The struggle resulted from direct conflict of economic interests and came when the stage of development had been reached, both in the North and in the South, which made surrender or war by the latter inevitable: then and not a moment before.

Just as the total abolition of slavery in Massachusetts was due not to the godliness and humanity of New Englanders but to the revolt of white wage-earners against negro competition; so and in like manner the Civil War arose from a direct antagonism of interest, due to the overwhelming preponderance which the North, with its rapidly developing capitalism and great immigration, was obtaining in the Union.

Mr. Simons, rather cruelly for the sentimentalists, quotes Lincoln's debate with Douglas, in which he declared that "we have no right to disturb slavery in the States where it exists, and we profess that we have no more inclination to disturb it than we have the right to do it." In his inaugural address he declared that he proposed to "save the Union" with or without slavery. In short, Abraham Lincoln was a "politician," who, as Mr. Simons says, owed his fame largely to "the triumphs he had gained" in his debates with Douglas before his election, in which very debates he accepted negro slavery as a portion of the American Constitution. Both Houses of Congress were of the same opinion as Lincoln. The fact that Lincoln himself was a fine character and represented the best of the Western men only makes his conduct the more conclusive evidence that even the ablest and most honest American

statesmen of the time did not appreciate the real economic and social seriousness of the issue.

In Europe as well as in North America the white wage-earners were more clear-sighted. They understood that belated chattel slavery stood in the way of progress, bad as the wages system was in itself. It was not accidental, therefore, that in Great Britain the upper classes nearly all took the side of the South and the workers held fast by the North. Successful capitalism, they saw, was an advance upon slaveholding. Of course it is easy to see now that when war was once entered upon the South never had the ghost of a chance. The industrial and economic superiority of the North determined the result of the conflict from the start. The details of the struggle are still interesting.

But the main truth that the American Civil War, like the war of the Colonies against the Mother Country, was in the ultimate issue waged for interests and not for principles, sweeps away a lot of false sentiment and leads directly up to the American class war of our day. Upon this last Simons touches but lightly. "Labour," however, being forced to fight as an organised whole, "is certain of victory in this last struggle." The workers have hitherto been "persuaded, bribed, or terrorised" into fighting for their masters. "Now that the working-class is fighting its own battles there is no possibility of defeat." The antagonism is as obvious as any in history, and all history shows us that though a religious movement may be set back by repression and persecution no power on earth can restrain social and economic development when the time is ripe for a crucial change. Hence the value of such a study as this of Simons's.

I suppose *The Man with the Hoe* of Mr. Markham has been more widely quoted by Socialists than any piece of verse in English; but with the

exception of this writer and Mrs. Stetson it cannot, I think, be said that Americans have done much in this department. Unfortunately, Mrs. Stetson has written nothing of late years on the same plane as *Similar Cases*, which I consider the most telling piece of semi-scientific satire ever written. The stanzas on the Anthropoidal Ape developing into Man have always seemed to me specially witty.

When Bronterre O'Brien declared against the formation of skilled Trade Unions, as the creation of an aristocracy of labour, which could scarcely fail to constitute a buffer on the side of the capitalists, so soon as wage-earners as a class began to move in earnest against the owners of the means of production, he saw a very great deal farther than most of his Chartist associates. It seemed almost impossible that this could be the result of what appeared at the time to be a genuine fighting combination of the skilled workers to obtain better conditions for all.

Marx and Engels and their friends regarded the earlier Trade Union Congresses as irrefragable evidence that the working-class of Great Britain, then economically by far the most advanced country in the world, would, by reason of these very same Unions, which O'Brien distrusted, lead on to the social revolution. Yet nobody can now honestly dispute that O'Brien, the Irish Catholic and soft money man, who completely anticipated Marx in the theory of the class war, understood what was going on around him very much better than the great theorist who laid the foundations of modern scientific Socialism. What Marx could not, or at any rate did not, apprehend in 1847 is quite unmistakable for us now. During two full generations the Trade Unions of Great Britain played precisely the part which O'Brien foresaw and predicted they would. Divided from the main

body of the proletariat, fighting almost exclusively for high wages and advantages for themselves, they were opposed to the employers as a section of privileged wage-earners and not as the champions of their class as a whole. They either stood outside politics altogether or made themselves the political tools of the Liberals—as indeed in the main they are still—who, to all who really understand the situation, are the worst enemies of the wage-earners, whether they pose as free-traders and *laissez-faire* men, or as burden-shifting bureaucrats of the modern unscrupulous type.

I thought of all this as I walked about at Townley Park, Burnley, with William Haywood, the American agitator, and Tom Mann, nearly two years ago. For America and Australia, not to speak of the continent of Europe, were suffering in precisely the same way. The highly paid craftsmen had, as a rule, little or no sympathy for the unskilled men, and indeed, where these acted as subordinates to the skilled craftsmen, treated such labourers worse than the employers themselves would have ventured to treat any of them. This is a matter of common knowledge among workmen, and I have frequently observed it myself.

Now the counter-blow was coming, and coming, as is so often the case in social matters, without much regard to what had gone before. The great Chartist agitator and his friends were right when they counselled the workers as a class to beware of the influence of an aristocracy of labour, however strongly it might appear to speak of a class-conscious class war at first. But those unions, once formed, had to be considered and dealt with, and this was no easy matter. Unless both skilled and unskilled workers could be brigaded as one force no solid industrial protest by the wage-earners as a whole was possible. It was sad that in this

country the mass of ill-paid workers should still be unorganised and undisciplined; but it was impossible to neglect the organised minority above, nor was it safe to imagine that they would consent to sink themselves in an undisciplined mass of toilers, merely because they had not succeeded to the extent they anticipated. The strike, I argued with my two friends, was *a* weapon of class conflict, and consolidated effort in the shape of a general strike, if properly prepared for, was infinitely better than mere sectional risings. But when wage-earners were sufficiently organised and had made adequate arrangements for a general strike, national or international, they were also in a position to carry out a social revolution, and this called not only for fighting class-consciousness but also for the knowledge of how to take up and apply political methods and adapt industrial means to the demands of the new period. Impatience, I further contended, is not a good guide in class warfare any more than in other warfare; nor did I believe that strikes were in themselves necessarily educative.

William Haywood, one of the strollers and talkers in our conversation in the fine old house and grounds of the Townley family, which now belong to the people of Burnley, is, I think, the most thoroughgoing and one of the most determined working-class leaders I have ever met, and I have come across a good many. He genuinely hates the men in possession in all countries. An extremely powerful figure with a clear-cut, clean-shaven face, the loss of one eye gives him almost a sinister appearance. In private discussion he is cool, friendly, and urbane; as a platform speaker he is not, as a rule, vehement or eloquent, but when he gets on a topic that really stirs his feelings it is easy to see that he is not one of those who, at a critical period, would allow any fear of consequences,

or even the opinion of those around him, to deter him from taking the course which he felt was necessary to ensure success. Haywood, like the more urbane but not less determined Debs, is a member of the working-class, and, also like the Socialist candidate for the Presidency, came to the front, or it may almost be said was pushed to the front, in a great strike or lock-out.

This was the fight of the Western Federation of Miners against the mine-owners in Colorado. It was a terrific business, and the treatment of the miners by the authorities, who were in league with the mine-owners, seems almost incredible. In fact, unless the details of the atrocities committed had been officially recorded and sworn to, nobody would believe to-day that such things took place. Hard-working men of good character and conduct, guilty of no offence beyond resistance to the capitalists in the struggle for better conditions of life, were attacked by the armed forces of the State and, on the authority of the Governor of Colorado, Mr. Steunenberg, were rounded up into so-called bull-pens by the hundred, where they were kept stockaded in, without any shelter, comfort, or convenience of any sort, for days and even weeks. Others were batoned and tortured in prison for no other reason than that they had revolted against the employing class.

Then fury naturally enough broke loose. Dynamite was undoubtedly resorted to. In the opinion of a friend of mine, who was in Cripple Creek at the time, who was not a Socialist and who had shares in the mines, explosives were resorted to on *both* sides. When things get really hot in a struggle of this sort the coolest leader in the world cannot keep control of the extremists. There is no need to go through the whole story again. Suffice it to say that Haywood, who had been throughout the

most active leader of the miners, of whom he was one, having been seized outside of Colorado, with his fellow-officials of the Union, Holleborne and Pettifer, was arraigned for the murder of Governor Steunenberg. It was believed by the workers throughout the States that, however innocent they might be, it was the intention of the capitalists to use all their influence to get them hanged on the evidence of an informer named Orchard, whose testimony was at least "suspect." The excitement consequently everywhere was very great, and became more intense as the trial approached.

At that time I did not know either of the accused men, but I was well acquainted with Clarence Darrow of Chicago, the leading counsel for the defence, who had stayed with us for a few days at Brasted a year or two before. A more earnest, not to say perfervid, advocate of the men's case it would have been impossible to find, but I am bound to say I doubted whether his industry and prudence were equal to his unquestionable eloquence. However, he had associated with him a man of quite a different character, and between them, with the help of the *Appeal to Reason* and other Socialist papers before and during the trial, they worked up a first-rate defence against what proved to be a very formidable indictment, and, unlike the Chicago Anarchists on much more slender evidence, the accused were acquitted.

From being unknown outside his own district, Haywood at once became a national figure. It takes a man of great vigour and force of character to be a leader of those Western miners. I know them well. I have lived among them, I have employed them, and a finer set of men as a whole do not exist. There are rogues and ruffians among them, of course, but the most capable and vigorous stock of the working-class is to be found out there

among the miners of the West. That they are not slow to fight, either in their own cause or in that of anybody whom they like and trust, cannot be disputed. I had the greatest difficulty myself on one occasion, when there was a dispute below ground as to whether the adjacent mine was not working in our ore, in preventing our miners from having a pitched battle with the enemy, working miners like themselves, who were just as ready to uphold the rights of the other side. Our fellows did not seem to understand my view of the case at all, namely that the two properties together were not worth a single life. There is no doubt, however, that their eagerness to decide the matter by the genial discrimination of rifle and revolver materially aided the equitable settlement which was eventually arrived at.

I congratulated myself warmly at the time upon having been instrumental in averting several cases of sudden death; but it is my profound conviction to this day that I was regarded by the men themselves as a bit of a milksop and spoil-sport because I had allowed my well-known love of peace to interfere with what would certainly have been a very desperate affray. Perhaps my own personal desire to go up the shaft again with as few holes through me as possible made me more earnest in my pacific efforts than I should otherwise have been. But you become pretty well acquainted with the people you have around you under circumstances of this kind, and I never had the slightest doubt in my own mind as to which side was in the right and which in the wrong in this serious Colorado difficulty, quite apart from any Socialist theories. It is not safe to try to cheat or bully Western miners. If the East is the East, the West is unquestionably the West. And of that West Haywood is a fine specimen.

This has been made very clear again of late in the matter of the strike at Lawrence in Massachusetts, which Haywood took in hand, after some long tours of agitation through the United States, his appearance as delegate at the International Socialist Congress at Copenhagen, and his visit to England, where he held some very successful meetings. It is impossible to imagine a greater contrast between any two sets of working people than that offered between the splendid, vigorous miners of Colorado and the polyglot inhabitants of the factory town of Lawrence. And of all these people in a centre whose population had doubled from 45,000 to 90,000 in twenty years, the Italians were the poorest and most despised of a by no means physically imposing set. It is admitted by impartial observers there was no sign of the slightest trouble in the place until within a few hours of the outbreak. It was regarded as quite a show industrial centre. The shareholders in the woollen and cotton mills, as well as their local directors and managers, came of the "first families in Boston," the great majority of whom, of course, had never visited Lawrence in their lives. They got their excellent dividends paid regularly, and how the workers lived who provided them was a matter of no importance. Foreign immigrants of the sort to be found in Lawrence performed their duty in that state of life into which it had pleased poverty to call them, when they worked steadily on, year in and year out, for at most their bare keep.

That was the view taken by the well-to-do throughout New England, and that this mere pecuniary, impersonal relation between investors and wage-earners was to the full as immoral, more degrading, and possibly quite as dangerous as the old chattel-slavery which existed prior to the war,

never occurred to the God-fearing persons of good estate who read in their newspapers of the fine buildings and admirable machinery which were their property at Lawrence. All of a sudden the producers themselves put themselves in evidence after a very effective fashion. An attempt was made to reduce wages, already too low to provide a decent standard of life, and thereupon first the Italians and then practically the whole of the workers in the town came out on strike. Italians, Belgians, Jews, Russians, Poles, Letts, many of whom could not understand one another's language, all made common cause against the employers; and the employers on their side, backed by the Municipal and State authorities, made common cause against the wage-earners, and brought pressure to bear upon them with the police and militia, and the perpetration of wholesale illegalities, which made things much worse than they were before.

The following calm summary might have been written by a Socialist:—"When the great mills were built in the young city of Lawrence (in 1847 and 1853), the workers were either of American or English stock—intelligent English-speaking people. They were not organised, and although the hours were desperately long, and the conditions probably worse than they are to-day, there was always a chance of escape—always a chance for the young man to go west and grow up with the country, or to go to the city and rise with the opportunities there presented. He could even start a little mill of his own; some of the successful mill-owners of to-day, indeed, got their start in that way. But that condition of individual opportunity and freedom has been rapidly changing in Lawrence as in all America. Our cheap western lands are gone; there is even now a back tide from West

to East. Easy opportunities of enterprise are getting scarcer, our cities are filling up, and finally, the centralisation of great corporations has made it less and less possible for enterprising young men to make a start in business for themselves."

Yet probably not one in a thousand of the foreigners in Lawrence took the slightest account of these important truths. They were for the most part ignorant and helpless. But they saw what they were "up against," and, led by Ettor and Giovanetti to start with, and then by Haywood and other revolutionary Socialists, supported also by funds from all parts of the country, they stood together most bravely and held together, these thirty different nationalities, as sturdily as any American or English wage-earners have ever done. This was the more remarkable, inasmuch as the managers had previously made it their practice to play off one nationality against another. What likewise was extraordinary was the revolutionary character of the demand made, which was nothing less than for the abolition of the entire wages system. That touch in the matter was due to Haywood, who took up the cry of our own revolutionary Chartists, from 1838 to 1847, as the programme of the "Industrial Workers of the World."

But the greatest surprise of all was that, after a tremendous struggle, the Lawrence strikers won, and gained an advance instead of a reduction not only of their own wages but for all the workers engaged in the cotton and wool industry. This gave a great impetus to the anti-political side of the Socialist movement, an impetus which has been intensified by the indictment, arrest, and imprisonment of the two Italian leaders, Ettor and Giovanetti, on a trumped-up charge of murder; because a woman striker was shot in the disturbances, when they were at a considerable distance from the spot

where the fatality occurred. Some indeed write and talk as if this revolt of the foreigners at Lawrence had brought a new revolutionary element into the field in American social and political life, and had proved that strikes were the only means whereby complete victory for the workers would be speedily achieved. But the increase of a percentage on little better than starvation wages is no great triumph after all, and what has been gained in comparatively good times may more easily be lost in bad.

The labour unrest throughout the United States, like the labour unrest in Europe, is only just beginning to crystallise into serious attack upon monopoly in all its forms. The actual industrial workers in America also constitute but a minority of the population, and such a revolution as the abolition of the wages system involves cannot be brought about by spasmodic attacks, which inflict more suffering by far upon the workers as a class than upon capitalists as a class. Even Haywood himself, who was the most active personality in the recent American Socialist Congress on the advanced side, cannot afford to neglect the political element in the struggle as represented by Debs's candidature for the Presidency; while it is quite certain that those who advocate political action chiefly will be compelled to take account of the increasing disposition of the workers themselves to force on conflicts, not caring greatly, as matters stand, whether they win or lose, so long as they stir up strife. The antagonisms in the American Socialist Party itself likewise cannot, in my opinion, long continue. The action of the "Politicians" will force solidarity upon those who are working for Socialism, and will drive off the minority towards anarchy in one direction and mere reform politics in the other.

Meanwhile, the increasing power of the great

Trusts and Corporations prepares the way steadily not only for overthrow but for reconstruction. It must be no light pressure of events which impels a man like Mr. Cory, the head of the great Steel Trust, to declare that such operations as those which he controls must eventually be handled by the community. On the other hand, the determined demand of the people for more direct control over their own political business for social ends, and the increasing vehemence of the denunciation of corruption in politics, even by "politicians" such as Mr. Roosevelt, Senator La Follette, and others, betoken a revolt in another direction against political as well as industrial "bosses."

It was a very jolly party that dined every evening during one of the meetings of the International Socialist Bureau at Brussels in the courtyard of the old Hôtel du Grand Miroir, now swept away. The cookery was good, the wine excellent, and the cognac, I am credibly told, superb. Not the least jolly of the little gathering of strangers who revolutionised the ideas of the "patron" and his household as to the invariable staidness and solemnity of modern English-speaking visitors—he bewailed to me privately the fact that most English and Americans now drank tea (his lip curled), and spoke contemptuously of travellers who despised the great *crus* of Burgundy, nowhere to be found to greater perfection than in Belgium—not the least jovial of us, I say, on this pleasing occasion was Mr. George Frederick Williams, barrister-at-law, of Boston, a Democrat in politics, on his way towards Socialism, I hoped, but anyway, notwithstanding his opinions and profession, a very charming convive.

This is the Mr. Williams who has virtually established the right of the Referendum in the United States by victory on appeal to the Supreme Court

from Oregon on this issue. Thus the possibility of dealing with existing social difficulties, and of overcoming very threatening social dangers by direct reference to the democracy, is admitted.

Mr. Williams was kind enough to send me the case as submitted by himself, and it was difficult to see how, upon the facts and arguments as he marshalled them, any other decision could have been given. It seems to me that with the great complications existing and the not trifling conflicts of interest arising in the various parts of the Great Republic, the only hope for a pacific transformation lies in the direct influence of the people, freed from the corrupt manipulation of bosses and politicians generally. Mr. Williams, in a letter to me, takes the rather sanguine view that in this way a peaceful solution of the class struggle may be brought about. I am afraid he underrates the power of resistance and obstinacy of the capitalists. In my opinion they will never give way without a fight.

Mr. Roosevelt's campaign has been a "politician's" campaign. He may be anxious to raise the tone of public life; he may see as Mr. Cory sees, and as was foreseen and predicted long before the Steel Trust was organised, or even the Standard Oil Trust became a power, national and international, that competition must find its logical term in monopoly; some of those who honestly backed him as the best man in the field may believe that he has a genuine wish to reorganise society in the interest of the whole community; he may succeed in getting a proportion of the Socialist vote in the next Presidential Election owing to this idea having spread among the less thoughtful of the party. But, when it comes to an attack upon the wages system, Mr. Theodore Roosevelt will be found where he rightly belongs,

on the side of those who will keep the mass of the people down by force on the plea of the danger to individual liberty. That is why the third Presidential candidature of Eugene Debs as an out-and-out revolutionary Socialist is so significant and so important.

CHAPTER XV

WALTER CRANE AND ROBERT BLATCHFORD

WHY should it be the fashion even now to declare that Socialists are necessarily ignorant folk who have no sense of decent behaviour and who in advocating the Co-operative Commonwealth are actuated only by envy and greed? Not so long ago the present Home Secretary, Mr. Reginald M'Kenna, thought proper to say, "Nobody joins the Socialist movement except for what he can get out of it." This was quite worthy of a Liberal Cabinet Minister. I wrote to him and told him in plain English what his statement was and demanded an apology. But a "politician" who has failed egregiously in every office he has held and has been highly paid for, possesses as of right a whole array of privileges in this country, and one of them is to be able to make any imputation upon outsiders he sees fit, without having the fear before his eyes of being forced to withdraw his remarks or to apologise. Elsewhere, every man, no matter what his position may be in politics, is compelled by universal usage to run some personal risk when he asserts about others what he himself knows not to be true. Should he refuse thus to back up his statements by displaying a modicum of courage, he is regarded by all the world as a person of the most despicable character. Duelling has its drawbacks, I am well aware, but it has a tendency to

check unseemly misrepresentation on the part of people who are inclined by nature to calumniate, and who allow free course to their malignity when they feel that they are safeguarded from all danger.

It would be very easy to give an almost interminable list of Socialists who not only have deliberately refused to make anything out of Socialism, but who have stuck to the cause when it inevitably meant for them serious loss in every way. That is nowadays quite unnecessary. All except Liberal Ministers and partisan journalists accept this obvious truth. What, however, is not so commonly admitted is that men of the very highest distinction in art and literature are daily devoting their genius, greatly in most cases to their own detriment, to the advocacy and adornment of Socialism in its fullest sense.

I do not know that it is possible to find at the present time a more eminent instance of this than Walter Crane. Fully a quarter of a century has elapsed since I first had the pleasure of making the acquaintance which quickly ripened into friendship of this great artist and charming man. There is always some difficulty in writing the full truth about an intimate friend while he is living, and enthusiasm for personalities is scarcely a common attribute of Social Democrats. We are, indeed, generally accused, quite untruly as I hope, of belittling our foremost men because we refuse to deify them or to abase ourselves before them as the manner of some is. But in the case of Walter Crane reticence would be out of place. From the first he has done his very utmost to help us in every possible way. Never has he been asked for the service of his brush, his pencil, or his pen, but that he has put his best services freely at the disposal of Socialism without the slightest reward beyond the sincere thanks and high appreciation

of his comrades and friends. His splendid cartoons in *Justice* on May Day and at other times have become the recognised annual artistic records of our movement all over the world. That for the year 1911 seems to me the finest of the whole series.

There is no overcrowding, no excess of elaboration, no need for explanation. The splendid car of international emancipation, surrounded by young men and maidens in gala attire and resplendent in the full glow of health and happiness, goes forth joyously into the future. Here Crane, almost for the first time so far as I can remember, makes perfect use of space as space. This is a very rare faculty. The procession passes on to the coming ages, and we can fill into the scope of atmosphere ahead the realisable glories of our scientific imagination. Black and white never before surely suggested so forcibly a feast of colour to the eye and mind.

And this is but one of a succession of masterpieces in that line which will, I predict, be treasured as invaluable possessions, long after the artist himself and the men and women whom he has helped and encouraged by his genius have passed away. These beautiful forms and lovely faces have given new ideals of what might be in art and in culture, in pleasurable work and active enjoyment to numberless Socialists who had hardly before perhaps comprehended the full possibilities of their own aspirations. The artist herein becomes a prophet and a seer as well as an exponent and satirist of the life of our day. In all this Walter Crane has done unforgettable work.

What a pity it is that there are no means of obtaining a just and noble estimate of an artist's powers (as well as a sympathetic one) except by the long wait necessary for the verdict of that Court of Final Appeal—Time.

At present the system seems to be, in the case of any one who shows individuality or independence in art, at first to ridicule, underrate, or abuse. If the innovation survives this process—well, the impression gains ground that there must be something in him, and, if he can only struggle on long enough and keep his head above water, the tide may turn in his favour—even to such an extent as to carry the genius on the top of it to quite the other extreme of laudatory appreciation, which may land him eventually in almost as dangerous a position, as regards his artistic safety, as that in which he was first discovered.

Between the bitterness of his enemies and the extravagant eulogies of his friends, it becomes almost as difficult for an artist to find his real latitude and longitude as for a ship in a fog.

This passage from Crane's own criticism on Whistler is true of art in all time and not merely in our own. Whistler, who had himself to thank for much of the lack of public appreciation during his life, is now made ridiculous when dead by being injudiciously acclaimed as "the greatest artist and most remarkable personality of the nineteenth century." As a matter of fact, and I met Whistler frequently, his personality was not specially remarkable, and it was only respect for his artistic faculty which kept men from telling him to his face he was an insufferable creature. The really clever things which he "got off," as his countrymen say, were few in comparison with the bad shots he made in the endeavour to say more of them. As most of his witticisms were malicious, not to say malignant, the impression produced was not favourable to him as a man to forgather with. "Remarkable" also is an elastic word. A person may be remarkable for obesity, or vulgarity, or for beauty or ugliness. Whistler in society was chiefly remarkable for conceit and ill-nature, and he was as sordid in his view of money in relation to his own art as Meissonier. I never had any but pleasant

intercourse with him myself, so my judgment of him as an individual is quite unprejudiced. His writings do not impress me, while his art has always looked to me as made up of a few fine things amid a series of straining for effect which achieved little or nothing. But a man has justified his birth and existence if he produces a single masterpiece, and if he leaves behind him several, nobody need care whether he was a remarkable personality, a delightful conversationalist, or an unmitigated nuisance. But Whistler as the greatest artist of the nineteenth century is, as Crane himself evidently thinks, a conception of him which his supreme critic "Time" will not justify.

But why on earth should we care what a man is or was who has given us or has done for us something we can admire? For myself I have never been able to work up any interest in the identity of Shakespeare. Whether the plays were written by an inspired country bumpkin or by a most unscrupulous and learned lawyer does not bother me. We have got the plays, and we have the sonnets. That is enough. They are the work of a great genius who was above all the creature of his period. Going to a much lower plane, and speaking of a man I knew, it makes no difference whatever when we read *The Soul of Man under Socialism* that the brilliant Irishman who wrote it was not a respectable bourgeois in his family life. A study of his *dégringolade*, if ably done, might be a masterpiece of tragic psychology. I should judge such a biography as a work of art by itself, without reference to Wilde's own writings and plays. But I am aware that this attitude of detachment in matters of art and literature is not the usual one. People in general, and especially Americans, are anxious to know every little detail about the painters or writers they admire, and I verily

believe some of them take off a considerable percentage of their regard from Rembrandt and Jan Steen when they learn that one was always short of cash and the other was a roystering blade.

Now, everybody admits that Crane is as pleasing a personality as Whistler was the reverse, and yet with all his great faculties he has had to rely upon that other Court of Appeal—the foreigners—to give him his due. And they have done this: just as the French by buying Whistler's portrait of his mother for the Luxembourg showed they knew a good thing when they saw it, and made his name by the purchase.

Though from the date of his work with Linton Walter Crane's sympathies were all on the right side, and, as Crane says, Linton himself was a Socialist in all but name, it was not till 1884 that he finally came over into the Socialist camp. Then it was a paper by William Morris on "Art and Socialism" which decided him to throw in his lot with us. This has always given "The Old Guard," as we call ourselves of 1881 and 1882, great satisfaction. For it was early in 1882 that Morris himself joined in the great fight, and certainly no more valuable recruit ever came to us thereafter than when Crane too enlisted in the Socialist army in 1884. To do this was to court prejudice and to reduce the extent of his own clientele. An artist is dependent upon the very class we were bitterly attacking for the admiration and the sale of his works. I cannot doubt that the fact that Crane is a Socialist is one of the reasons why, keenly appreciated on the continent of Europe, his genius has never been fully recognised in his own country. But that made no difference to him. Even in the United States, where he was received on his visit in a manner befitting his real position in the world of art, he did not hesitate for an instant to

proclaim himself an ardent supporter of men who were suffering under ruthless class injustice. The change of attitude towards him was at once very marked. It is not a small proof of courage and conviction thus to run counter to the feelings of hospitable and well-meaning folk who could have been exceedingly useful to Crane, and who were of opinion that such matters as imprisonments and executions of men for their opinions lay outside the scope of an artist's survey.

But—though here again the truth has been somewhat obscured even by Socialists—Walter Crane did quite as much in his way as William Morris to reawaken artistic sense in regard to home decoration, and in the small matters of daily domestic life as well as on the higher plane of public art. It is easy now to say that the founders of the Arts and Crafts Organisation and Exhibition have done their work, and that in any case the natural trend of society was all in that direction. "Natural trend" is a slipshod phrase anyhow; but there can be not the slightest doubt that the Arts and Crafts movement, helped forward as it was by the eager enthusiasm of its founders and followers, produced a marked effect upon the taste of the time in almost every department.

In all this Crane was one of the most active spirits from the first and throughout. As the first chairman, he did much to set the pace and to keep it going. To encourage and develop a love of art and beauty, of high design and complete finish, for their own sake, in a community where production for profit and money-getting mechanism of the market rule the greater portion of the output even of the higher class of work, was no light task. Crane, associated with Cobden Sanderson, and other Socialist craftsmen, and aided by the great name and works of William Morris, may be

said to have effected the impossible. To put their achievement on the lowest plane they did succeed in making a return to the old revolting commonplace inconceivable in many directions, if as yet the social surroundings have postponed the attainment of their ideals in their own day. This fight against unpromising conditions they all saw could never result in final victory until those conditions themselves were transformed; they acting meanwhile within the great mass of mankind as a conscious force of taste and intellect impelling their fellows in that direction.

The contrast between the art of the period of undeveloped commercialism and that under capitalist supremacy has been put thus in the early days of our English movement:—

> The exquisite armour of the knights, their swords and lances of perfect temper, the splendid and often humorous decorations in the stone and woodwork in the cathedrals, churches, and abbeys, the illuminations of the missals, the paintings of the time, the manner in which beautiful designs and tracery nestled even in places where it might be thought the human eye could rarely or never reach, nay, even such fragments of ordinary domestic furniture and utensils as have been preserved, all show that the art of the Middle Ages, like the art of Greece, was something loved and cherished and made perfect for its own sake, that beauty welled up unbidden from the spontaneous flow of the ideas of the time (p. 10).
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> Instead of the pleasant, intellectual, fruitful labour of the Middle Ages we have the barren hideous drudgery of the factory and the cotton mill. While it lasts, all the ordinary surroundings of life must of necessity be ugly and brutal, and what of art is left for a time, depending, as it does, not on its own life but on the memory of past days of glory and beauty, must be produced by men of exceptional gifts, living isolated amidst the ugliness and brutality of their own time, and protesting against the spirit of their own age. Thus the capitalist system threatens to dry up the very springs of all

art, that is, of the external beauty of life, and to reduce the world to a state of barbarism (p. 19).[1]

I remember talking some years ago on this subject of ancient beauty and modern ugliness with Victor Adler, the Austrian Socialist leader, who has just received the congratulations of the Socialist world on the attainment of his sixtieth birthday. He told me that he and his wife, the longer they lived, were more and more driven back upon the old times, in order to lift their conceptions of art and beauty above the pretentious ugliness of to-day. That is really the same with us all.

Human history would acquire a new significance in the mind of the poet and artist, as they beheld, in the long course of evolution, the race in a vast procession emerging from the mists of primæval time; from its early struggles with wild nature; from the gens and tribal state, finding safety in primitive communism, and in that state beholding the invention of the essential fundamental necessities and appliances, such as the spade, the plough, and the wheel, the spinning and weaving of cloth, pottery, and the birth of song and art.

From the tragic vicissitudes of history, of race conflict, of conquest and domination of warlike tribes and the institution of slavery, the foundation and influence of the great ancient states and empires, and their inevitable decay and fall, and the new order springing from their ruins; the tragic tale of wars and pestilence and famine, of flood and of fire and of earthquake, and yet onward still through all these perils and disasters we may see humanity marching beneath the banner of social justice to fulfil its destiny; the hero spirits still passing the torch of enlightenment and freedom from hand to hand, and as one sinks into the silence another advances towards the full flush of the new morning.

[1] From *A Summary of the Principles of Socialism*, written for the Democratic Federation by H. M. Hyndman and William Morris, London, 1883. This pamphlet was signed by the following, then members of the Executive Committee of the body: E. Belfort Bax, Herbert Burrows, R. D. Butler, H. H. Champion (Hon. Secretary), W. J. Clark, H. A. Fuller, H. M. Hyndman (Chairman), J. L. Joynes, Tom S. Lemon, James Macdonald, William Morris (Hon. Treasurer), James F. Murray, H. Quelch, A. Scheu, Helen Taylor, John E. Williams. And that was nearly thirty years ago.

With all the resources of science and the potential glories of art in our hands, with unprecedented control over the forces of nature, and in full knowledge of the essentials of health, these being all dedicated to the service of the whole community, who would thus be in the possession of the elements and materials for a full and happy human life, surely we shall surely find new and abundant inspiration of art, and constant social use and demand for its powers.

In depicting the story of man, and the drama of life, in great public monuments, in commemoration of the past, in the education of the present; in the adorning of domestic and public buildings and places, in the accompaniments of great festivals, processions, and celebrations—in such directions, surely, we shall find the widest possible field for the exercise of all the capacities of art - architecture, painting, sculpture and the arts of design and handicraft, with music and poesy, as in the fulness of communal life we shall possess the materials for building and maintaining fair cities, and dwelling - places surpassing in beauty anything that the history of the world has yet recorded, since their foundations will rest upon the welfare of the whole people!

Such is Crane's own view of what Art in its highest sense, from architecture to domestic decoration, will then mean to the mass of mankind. And our contemporary posterity in foreign lands recognise that he himself has done a great deal towards the attainment of his own high ideal in this direction, so far as such success can be achieved in our day.

But, as already said, Crane has obtained abroad the recognition which he has not yet received in this country. In Germany a whole succession of critics of the highest distinction have devoted monographs and long articles to his work, and his place in the world of art is permanently assured, many of his pictures having been acquired for that country which are greatly esteemed. In Vienna, where much has been written on him, several of his works have been purchased for the Imperial Art Museum and many of them have been reproduced. In Hungary the enthusiasm for Crane's

art is even greater, and he is well represented in the National Gallery and National Museum at Buda-Pesth. In France Crane has been honoured from 1889 onwards, having received many evidences of admiration and respect, while in the department of black and white it is scarcely too much to say that he has had an influence similar to that which Constable had upon landscape painting. In Italy not only have a number of Crane's drawings of Rome been purchased for the national Corsini Palace Gallery, but he has by invitation painted his own portrait for the famous historic collection at the Uffizi in Florence, where it is now hung—an honour so exceptional that his decorations as member of Italian orders and the books and articles that have been written about him in Italy are scarcely worth mention.

Art, like music, is international, and needs no translation, and it is pleasant to record such widespread international appreciation of the work of an English Socialist who has never at any time during more than a quarter of a century hesitated to avow and to speak up for his creed. The following sonnet shows something of Crane's literary power in verse :—

RENASCENCE

Art, once an outcast in a wintry land,
Far from the sun-built house where she was born,
Did wander desolate and laughed to scorn
By eyeless men who counted gold like sand:
Nor any soul her speech would understand—
A friendless stranger in the city lorn,
Toil-grimed and blackened with the smoke upborne
Of human sacrifice of brain and hand.

Then Art, aweary, laid her down and slept
Beneath an ancient gate, and dreaming, smiled,
For Hope, like spring, came full of tidings good;
And Labour, huge and free, and Brotherhood
Led Art between them like a little child
In time new-born, to glad new life that leapt.

There is no man in the whole Socialist movement who has done more to spread and popularise the teachings of Socialism than Robert Blatchford. At times I feel very angry with him—an exacerbation against his doing the things which he ought not to have done, and leaving undone the things which he ought to have done, that is shared by nearly all the Socialists I know. But I remember well those articles of his in the *Sunday Chronicle* of Manchester, when Blatchford first turned Socialist.

For propaganda purposes he has never written anything more telling or forcible than those early notes. As I read them I felt at once that a new recruit of exceptional power and value had come into the party, though Blatchford had not then joined any definite Socialist organisation. Their style was pleasing, direct, and persuasive, meeting and removing the difficulties of the ordinary mind in a plain, sensible, straightforward way. Knowing by intuition that the majority of his readers would not trouble to think out the real bearing of a series of complicated arguments, Blatchford took it upon himself to do their thinking for them, and to make it all so easy that nobody could fail to understand him. He was careful not to weary the devoted band which speedily grew up around him by too prolonged a dissertation upon this or that point. He took events of the day and questions put to him in his stride, as it were, and dealt with them as if he were just a common man dealing with other common men. If there was any art in his method —and art there undoubtedly was, conscious or unconscious—it was most carefully concealed.

Nothing more attractively natural could be penned than these *Chronicle* articles looked. As I said at the time, Blatchford recalled the admirable, clear, personal style of William Cobbett without Cob-

bett's reactionary prejudices, and devoted to a wider propaganda. There are drawbacks to this extreme lucidity of thought and easy dressing-gown-and-slippers method of inculcating truth. That, I think, is undeniable. The reader is saved the trouble of thought; but is it quite certain that new ideas thus delectably put do not slip through the persons who absorb them like the sausages through Baron Munchausen's ducks? They are caught by the charm of the easily swallowed writing; but is not each duck in turn held by the string of personal regard for the writer, rather than by the thorough conviction of a problem thought out for himself? That in nowise detracts from the merit of Blatchford's style or minimises the good which he has beyond all question done; but I have sometimes asked myself whether I have ever fully understood any important subject which it has not cost me a great deal of trouble to master for myself.

It took me two years to comprehend fully Marx's economics and philosophy of history. I do not say it need take anybody nearly so long, now that his works have been elucidated and simplified from so many points of view. I am, however, of opinion that even the most serious reading being, as Schopenhauer truly says, but the following of another man's footsteps along the highroad of thought, is little more than mechanical, unless accompanied by something not far from original thinking by the reader himself; so when writing becomes easy and attractive to the public to the extent that Blatchford's was in those early days and in his *Merrie England*, a very large proportion of those who enjoyed his pleasing periods and crushing exposures got but a light hold upon the ideas which underlay them. When, too, I saw the *Sunday Chronicle* giving very wide publicity to these subversionary doctrines so mellifluently set forth, I asked myself how long

would the increase of circulation obtained for the paper by this, in effect, revolutionary pamphleteering compensate the well-gilded owners for the damage done to their own widespread capitalist interests by the promulgation at their own expense of the truths of expropriation to come, thus insidiously taught through the columns of their paper ?

The arrangement did not last long after I had begun thus to calculate upon the probable duration of this alliance between these extremes of incompatibility. Blatchford had offered him virtually the choice of abandoning his Socialism or of giving up his position, which also meant his livelihood, on the paper. He at once chose the latter course, and out of this, for him, momentous decision arose the *Clarion*, which, as Blatchford himself told me, he and his friend Thompson fought down to their last half-crown before, when things looked blackest, the new journal began to turn the corner. That paper has done good service to the cause. I should be the last to deny it; but it had not, of course, the opportunities of getting at outsiders which Blatchford made for himself when writing for a purely capitalist organ. Somehow, too, it never seems to have gathered round itself a solid band of fighting Socialists. That probably is more due to the ignorance and silly sentimentality of our people at large than to any fault of the *Clarion* itself. One thing Blatchford has achieved to an unprecedented degree. He has acquired all through the country an amount of personal popularity never before granted, so far as I know, to any man on account of articles and books alone.

He has taken the chair for me in nearly all the large cities, and the affectionate relations between himself and his devoted followers are unmistakable.

Whether he speaks, which is very seldom indeed, or whether he does not speak, makes no difference. They are there to worship him, and worship him they do. It is quite evident that in some way, they and their families, having most of them got rid of the God of their childhood, partly dethroned by Blatchford's attack, have constituted unto themselves a worshipful deity in the person of the champion of the bottom dog. We may laugh a little at the manifestation of this tendency to adore, but there is no mistake about its existence.

The "Clarionets," who will persist in feminising themselves as "Clarionettes," constitute an element in the Socialist Party unknown in any other country. They do their full share of propaganda work of their own kind. The Clarion Vans are an institution, likewise, so far as I am aware, peculiar to Great Britain. They have had excellent speakers on their vans, notably Hartley, Kennedy, and Bramley, who preach Socialism with a vigour and persistence, unweakened even by exhaustion and bad health. In fact Blatchford and his paper have established a social section which lives and moves and has its being in a loosely-organised series of groups throughout Great Britain, and more particularly in Lancashire and Yorkshire, which are undoubtedly Socialist in all their aspirations, and contrive in the meanwhile to get a great deal of fun out of life, without finding it necessary to elaborate any Trinity as the arbiter of their destinies so long as Blatchford holds his own upon this earth.

"Le style c'est l'homme." It is not so. I have never believed it. I do not believe the written or even the spoken style tells you a bit about the man himself. And of all the men who, by their writings, have had an influence upon their day and generation, Blatchford's style tells least of him.

Any one would think, to read him, that he is active, vigorous, humorous, conversational. He is nothing of the sort. In his daily life he is the laziest white man who ever sat on the top rail of a fence. He will sit for hours smoking in silence, like a Red Indian chief puffing at his calumet. Talk, not he. He ruminates. People say his refusal to deliver an address as chairman of a meeting is "pose," for he can speak very well if he likes. I do not think so. It is the same with him by his own fireside, even in company with that whisky and water he pretends to like. Why, having decided to abandon energy himself, he should be the cause of energy in others is an enigma I do not presume to solve.

Just another word. Why should a man who certainly takes a personal view of life and is by no means slow to deal with good and bad motives in human thought, expression, and action—the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost of modern materialism—why, on earth, should he of all Socialists set to work to convince himself and to persuade others that we are, all of us, no better than sentient automata, whose every motion is prescribed for us by a long series of antecedents of begetting and environment leading up to the immediate consequent over which not the most capable of us has the slightest voluntary control? It may be so. The problem of free will and predestination, of choice and determinism, of the nominal and the real, has been debated straight down from the priests and astronomers of Babylon to the scientists of Paris and Berlin. But that a writer who is vigorously engaged in the controversies of our own day, which assuredly do not lack on his own side a certain element of direct ethical imputation, should be thus concerned to relieve the most criminal or most incapable—the words in such

conditions are synonymous—from any responsibility for their misdoings is surely in itself compulsory evidence of the illogicality of the human intelligence.

But Robert Blatchford has done a great deal to lead people to think who never thought before, easy as he has endeavoured to make such reflection for them. And he will do more when he gets bored with his Norfolk retreat. Meanwhile he, like a few others of us, can look on with some disgust at the immediate results of his propagandist campaign. He has helped so far to put the tricksters and charlatans in possession of the strong places of the country, and they in their gratitude turn their artillery upon *him*.

SOCIALIST DRINKING SONG

AIR: *The March of the Cameron Men.*

Fill your glasses once more, fill them up to the brim,
And drink one last toast ere we part,
A toast to the triumph—now well on its way—
Of the cause that is nearest our heart.
Drink deep and drink true, 'tis the toast of the brave,
And lustily swell the refrain—
Here's death to the system of master and slave,
And the "Freedom of Labour" again.
And again, yet again,
To the "Freedom of Labour" again.

Our watchword! How oft in the darkness of night
Was it whispered mid trembling and fears,
Till the thinkers and fighters for Freedom at last
Had rolled back the veil from the years.
And we saw why for ages had Labour endured
And suffered the pang and the pain.
Now the darkness has gone that our vision obscured,
Here's the "Freedom of Labour" again.
And again, yet again,
To the "Freedom of Labour" again.

Yes, knowledge spells Freedom, and slavery flies
From the light that illumines the mind,
And Liberty's coming with step slow but sure,
And her cause is bestirring mankind.
And tyranny trembles, as Labour at length
Breaks the links and the folds of its chain,
And smiles as it thinks of its fine brawny strength.
Ah! the "Freedom of Labour" again,
And again, yet again,
To the "Freedom of Labour" again.

So comrades once more fill your cups to the brim,
Let your cheers ring applause to the toast.
How the future will covet the name and the fame
Of the man who will honour it most.
To your feet. Here's the cause that can never be lost
While burns yet a thought in the brain.
Here's the brave who died for it, ne'er counting the cost,
And the "Freedom of Labour" again,
And again, once again,
To the "Freedom of Labour" again.

JOHN LESLIE.

SILVER AND GOLD

O ye that are grinding your grist in the city,
Where men in your markets are bartered and sold,
'Tis the lives of your slaves that ye crush without pity,
Though the grist of your grinding be silver and gold.

Lo, your folk-mates their sweets in the sunshine are hiving,
For the summer is here with his honey-sweet breath;
O what is the light whereunto ye are striving,
When all your horizon is darker than death?

O, what and whereto are the ways ye are treading?
What tale of your deeds shall hereafter be told?
Is it true that ye haste as a groom to the wedding,
With nought in the bride-bed but silver and gold?

O shame! The sun shines of your eyes unbeholden,
Ye have heard not the word that the sweet summer saith;
For the gods of your worship are silvern and golden,
And who shall redeem ye from life that is death?

Nay, none may redeem ye; your life is your burden,
That hath lain on your shoulders like lead from of old;
There is none that may share in its weight for a guerdon,
Or help ye to bear it for silver and gold.

Nay, alone, all alone, ye must bear your life's sorrow,
The life that for others brings joy with its breath,
But for you groweth sadder from morrow to morrow,
Till all of its sorrows are ended in death.

J. L. Joynes.

MAY DAY

The Workers.

O Earth, once again cometh Spring to deliver
Thy winter-worn heart, O thou friend of the Sun;
Fair blossom the meadows from river to river,
And the birds sing their triumph o'er winter undone.

O Earth, how a-toiling thou singest thy labour,
And upholdest the flower-crowned cup of thy bliss,
As when in the feast-tide drinks neighbour to neighbour,
And all words are gleeful, and nought is amiss.

But we, we, O Mother, through long generations
We have toiled and been fruitful, but never with thee
Might we raise up our bowed heads and cry to the nations
To look on our beauty and hearken our glee.

Unlovely of aspect, heart-sick and aweary
On the season's fair pageant all dim-eyed we gaze;
Of thy fairness we fashion a prison-house dreary,
And in sorrow wear over each day of our days.

The Earth.

O Children! O toilers, what foemen beleaguer
The House I have built you, the Home I have won?
Full great are my gifts, and my hands are all eager
To fill every heart with the deeds I have done.

The Workers.

The foemen are born of thy body, O Mother,
In our shape they are shapen, their voice is the same;
And the thought of their hearts is as ours, and no other;
It is they of our own house who bring us to shame.

The Earth.

Are ye few? Are they many? What words have ye spoken
To bid your own brethren remember the Earth?
What deeds have ye done that the bonds should be broken,
And men dwell together in goodwill and mirth?

The Workers.

They are few, we are many: and yet, O our Mother,
Many years were we wordless, and nought was our deed,
But now the word flitteth from brother to brother:
We have furrowed the acres and scattered the seed.

The Earth.

Win on then unyielding, through fair and foul weather,
And pass not a deed that your day shall avail.
And in hope every spring-tide come gather together,
That unto the Earth you may tell all your tale.

Then this shall I promise, that I am abiding
The day of your triumph, the ending of gloom,
And no wealth that ye will then my hand shall be hiding,
And the tears of the spring into roses shall bloom.

WILLIAM MORRIS.

CHAPTER XVI

RUSSIAN REVOLUTIONISTS

Of all the revolutionists I have ever met, and I have been brought into close contact with many, I consider the Russians as a whole are the most determined, self-sacrificing, and desperate; as certainly they are those who are treated with the most ruthless severity, and have to reckon with the most unscrupulous counterplots. It is wonderful what sufferings all sections of them, from the extreme terrorists to the mildest moderates, have undergone in their patriotic endeavours to obtain something like a reasonable government in their great country. No matter how heavily and cruelly reaction may weigh upon them, the majority of those whom I have met are never discouraged, and they run risks again and again for their cause, regardless of the horrible fate of their predecessors, with a coolness and courage never surpassed, certainly, in any country in modern times. This applies to the full as much to their women as to their men. In fact, had it not been for the marvellous pluck and unfailing comradeship of the women it is doubtful whether the men could ever have performed the splendid feats of heroism they have achieved; while the deeds of the men inspired the women in their turn. It has been a magnificent emulation in well-doing, such as the world has rarely if ever seen.

When the record of the uprising of humanity against its oppressors is written in the better days to come, and the story of the emancipation of mankind is fully told and yearly celebrated, one of the foremost places in the pageant of this long and glorious struggle will be given to the unfaltering champions, known and unknown, of the freedom of the Russian peoples. For myself, I consider it a privilege to have known well so many of these standard-bearers of revolution throughout their period of depression and conspiracy, revolt and defeat, and I hope that some of them at any rate will live to see the final victory of the cause to which they have given up more than life.

The following story of a lower type of subversionist merely serves as a contrast to the many Russian heroes of both sexes I have met.

I first heard of Lavrenius from my old friend and fellow-worker in Socialism, Adolphe Smith, and he it was, I think, who introduced me to this extraordinary Russian. At that time Lavrenius was a well-to-do Anarchist, who was dabbling in bombs, picric acid, and other pleasing appurtenances of the propaganda of deed. His laboratory was in the same block of buildings as his flat, but easily to be reached from his domestic quarters by a short walk round a very obvious balcony. Whether Lavrenius and his friends thought that such a very transparent deception was sufficient to hoodwink the astute Paris police, and their even more wide-awake Russian compeers, I know not; but to me it seems clear that Lavrenius, the Anarchist conspirator, might just as well have carried on his chemical experiments in the open street for all the good such advertised secrecy as this did him. Of course, the supervisors of "dangerous" suspects were quite well aware of what he was doing all the time, knew who were his associates, were advised as to

the destination of his carefully-prepared and concealed packets for use in the chemical parcel post; and, in fact, knew quite as much about Lavrenius's own business, if business it can be called, as he did himself. They were ready to "nab" him and the whole lot of his fellow-conspirators whenever it suited their purpose to make a timely and dramatic seizure.

At this period there was also in Paris a well-known Count, who was one of the most infamous agents for the Russian Government against Russian refugees and conspirators that was ever employed by the Third Section of the Muscovite police. This man was not content with the ordinary forms of Muscovite moucharderie. He was infinitely ingenious as well as wholly unscrupulous in his methods. I have before commented upon the extraordinary carelessness of most Russian conspirators I have met as compared with similar men of other nations with the like vocation whom I have known at various periods of my life. It is scarcely too much to say that they almost court detection by the offhand and indifferent way in which they carry on their dangerous schemes.

Of course, it is only natural their deadly enemies should take advantage of this slackness on their part to deal them blows which might otherwise have been fended off. Still more natural that they should deliberately lay themselves out to trade upon the pleasures or vices to which the refugees may be addicted. Of all these underhand tricks and treacheries this particular Russian agent spoken of was a past-master. Seliverstoff himself was indeed a person of the most detestable private character, and used the lavish funds with which he was provided to indulge himself in horrible debauchery. In this way he became acquainted with the worst forms of Paris life, and had at his command in con-

sequence men and women who, provided they got enough money by it, would stick at no conceivable villainy in order to gratify their chief and paymaster. These male and female ghouls were constantly on the look-out to administer to the lusts and help in the political business of this monster.

The one department faded naturally and imperceptibly into the other. No Russian of either sex could feel safe from his machinations, or be sure that some elaborate plot for kidnapping, got up by these human wolves and winked at by the French police, would not succeed in gripping them in such wise that succour was hopeless. They themselves alone knew the full extent of the evil which had befallen them, when, having been hustled secretly out of France and across half Europe, they found themselves, on awakening perhaps from a drugged sleep, at the mercy of the Czar's sworn torturers.

This might easily happen to the least-known and most circumspect at any moment, and does, as a matter of fact, not unfrequently happen even to-day. But the system was never brought to such a pitch of perfection as by Seliverstoff at this time, and some of the methods resorted to in order to trap the more dangerous and less rigidly moral of the anti-Government Russians in Paris were of such a nature as to shock the not very delicate susceptibility of the Parisian *police des mœurs* themselves. So abominable at last had certain of these underlife schemes become, alike in their original infamy in Paris and in their results to the unfortunate victims when they arrived in Russia, that a sensation of horror and hatred, with an unappeasable thirst for vengeance, had seized upon the whole Russian colony.

Seliverstoff, as the chief Imperial agent, was therefore warned by the French authorities that his life was in danger. But he was a man of

unshakable courage: he had run such remarkable risks before, and had escaped unscathed so often, that he paid no attention to these more pressing signals. In the end he was suddenly removed from the scene of his sinister activity by a capable assassin; and such a wretch was he known to be that, useful as he was to them, not even his own Government much regretted his final withdrawal from his post of dishonour. But something had to be done to show zeal, and, as a consequence of the Count's compulsory resignation, there was an organised raid by the French police upon the whole body of Russian Anarchists and speedy-removal men. Of these Lavrenius was one. He did not show, I recall, any marked courage on his arrest and trial; rather the contrary. But his evident desire to minimise his complicity in the department of explosive reform did not save him from imprisonment; nor would his alleged contrition have procured his release but for the fact that he had the great good fortune to be wedded to a singularly pretty, agreeable, and devoted wife.

This lady left no stone unturned to get her husband out of the awkward incarceration to which he had been condemned. Not a newspaper office in Paris at which her face and figure were not known, scarce an editor whom she did not interview, no Minister or Secretary of influence whom she did not contrive in some way to approach. Charming women, I am told, have certain behind-the-scenes influence even here in this prudish and puritan London, though of course in our case nobody admits it. In Paris people are more frank or less hypocritical. Mme. Lavrenius's eloquence and persuasiveness, her voice, her face, her charm, her figure produced a cumulative and collective effect. First one, then another personage of importance discovered that the husband of so

delightful a being of the opposite sex ought not to be detained in durance longer than was necessary. So in due course Lavrenius returned to the lady's embraces, and she took up afresh her domestic duties in connection with the revolutionary projects which they had perforce temporarily abandoned. They then went to Switzerland or Italy, or some country less police-ridden than France.

But here I return to an earlier stage in this revolutionist's career. That the man, though of good birth, excellent education, and good means, was, in all honesty, as is not uncommon in Russia, a thoroughgoing Anarchist I am persuaded. Unfortunately, he appears to have carried his subversive theories of the individualist type into the more sordid personal matters of *meum* and *tuum*, and even into the ethics of removal as applied to a member of his own family. A well-known Polish lady of rank, who was chief organiser of the Anarchist groups in one of the cities of Russia, received a secret visit from Lavrenius very late one night, when he made to her the following extraordinary proposal. Lavrenius, it appeared, had a very rich uncle whose acknowledged heir Lavrenius himself was. It was exceedingly desirable, as well for Lavrenius as for the cause, or so he thought it, that the Anarchist nephew should inherit this misapplied wealth somewhat earlier than, according to the ordinary dispensations of nature, for the uncle was a very healthy man, the next of kin would come by his own.

How morally to expedite the departure of the present reactionary encumbrancer who stood in the way of the speedy realisation of funds for the young apostle of the true faith? That was the question. Lavrenius put it point-blank to the lady who controlled, as he thought, for the common good, the means of taking off rich relations

to the advantage of impecunious heirs-at-law. Would this estimable lady head-centre of the fanatics of overthrow kindly provide him with the poison necessary to deal with the uncle, in return for a legal undertaking to contribute a solemn percentage of his inherited substance to the Anarchist coffers? The lady, not unnaturally, was horrified, and declared that her opinions did not in any way countenance private murder, however advantageous, either as principal or as accessory before the fact. The transaction was indignantly refused. It may be that thereafter Dives the uncle died a natural death: it may be that Lavrenius the nephew found a less strait-laced purveyor of lethal condiments. What is certain is that shortly thereafter the obstacular uncle was gathered to his fathers, and the progressive nephew reigned in his stead. To do him justice, the acquisition of wealth no more affected his principles than the suggested method of its acquisition perturbed his conscience. Anarchist he was and Anarchist he remained. An Anarchist of deed most certainly.

And so it came about that before Lavrenius left Paris, after he had been forced to quit Russia by reason of his public virtues, he met there, at a great reception, the lady to whom he had made his engaging proposal for joint association in crime. It was a dramatic moment for her. She recognised him at once; but, owing to the circumstances under which they had first met, Lavrenius had no idea that he was meeting her. However, though a person of scrupulous integrity and by no means addicted to the removal of obnoxious or wealthy humans, except in the way of justifiable political execution, she thought she would hold her peace and take the charitable view that the uncle whose means Lavrenius had so suddenly and conveniently

inherited went the way of all flesh without any well-meant domestic assistance.

I am bound to say that Lavrenius, being in possession of large funds, acquired with them a very enlarged confidence in the rectitude of others. I really did not know him exceptionally well, and though, apart from his views on the limits of personal ethics, he was quite a nice fellow, I was amazed beyond power of description when one fine day I received from him a draft for a very large amount of money, requesting me to open an account at the Western Branch of the Bank of England with a portion of it and to invest the balance in Consols. I carried out his instructions, and for some years thereafter cash and securities—which I bought, I remember, at $98\frac{1}{2}$—stood in my name in Burlington Gardens. Then, equally with no warning, I got a request from him to sell out his Consols (which I did, in the halcyon days before the war, at $112\frac{1}{2}$), and to remit principal and accumulated interest to him. If I had pocketed the whole of the proceeds, which, the actual ownership being quite untraceable, I could easily have done, I firmly believe he would only have said, "I didn't know they did those things in the Occident."

As matters turned out, it is almost a pity I did not take a leaf out of his Anarchistic moral code and appropriate the entire sum. However, he got the money from me all right and turned up in London with his charming wife and nice little boy, who stayed with us for some time while he finished up his transfer from the Continent, then settled down with them at Anerley and read for the Bar. Later he found himself in serious case from tuberculosis, was told Colorado Springs was the only place on the planet where he had any chance of saving his life for a few years from the effects of the disease that he was suffering under. Off to that sanatorium

they all three therefore went, leaving me as a legacy a fine French office desk and chair, at which I am now writing.

Then came the tragical ending. After a year or so of painful struggling against his incurable malady at Colorado Springs and Denver, Lavrenius himself died, and his widow, so she wrote me, and so her man of business, a well-known advocate-solicitor of the latter city, confirmed, was at first inconsolable. The child, now grown up to be a fine little chap, was her sole care and she lived only for him.

But this did not last very long. Mme. Lavrenius was young and pretty; Western Americans are as susceptible as other misguided males. Unfortunately her choice of a lover fell upon a dashing fellow who was euphemistically called a "sport." Their courtship was short-lived and ended abruptly. A "difficulty" arose at the gaming-table in reference to the methods of play adopted by Mme. Lavrenius's admirer, which resulted in his being carried to the hospital with at least one dangerous perforation of the body. Mme. Lavrenius tended him for days with the most unwearying solicitude, and when at last he died, for his wounds were mortal from the first, she took the blow so much to heart that she went straight to her rooms, shot her boy through the head with a revolver and then shot herself. The affair made some stir at the moment and was then quickly forgotten. It made a very sad impression upon me.

Lavrenius was, I need scarcely say, quite an exception among the Russian revolutionists I have met. They are particularly careful not to confuse their Anarchist theories in reference to society with any personal desire they may have for their own immediate gain. In regard, however, to their general carelessness, at any rate in Western Europe, I can only repeat what I have said before. I have

never known any other set of conspirators in any country who ran such risks and who held their lives so cheap. When, for instance, the Russian Revolutionary Peasant Party, not the Social-Democrats, held their meeting of delegates in London, they at first displayed a very natural and laudable anxiety to secure the safety of these head-centres of upheaval. Our friend Volkovsky asked me what should be done to keep off the enemy. I made several suggestions: the best I consider was that a big barge should be hired and the whole party should go for a trip on the Norfolk Broads for a few days, having taken the precaution beforehand of curtailing the exuberant growth of hair on head and cheek and chin, which, in this period of cropping and shaving, might attract to these denizens of the plains of the Ukraine and other wilder parts of Russia undesirable attention. This was regarded as too complete if not too magnificent a project. Others were debated and discarded.

Eventually, these most estimable enemies of the Czar took refuge for the full collective elaboration of their schemes in an Ethical Society Club-room or chapel in a bye-lane up Notting Hill way. At first secrecy was preserved, and on the whole the display of hair was kept within limits. Only two Englishmen were in the secret—J .F. Green and myself—and attended the gatherings. For six solid days no word of their whereabouts reached the outside world. The ubiquitous British press was carefully put off the scent, though, may be, the Russian mouchards were not so easily depisted. But the evening and the morning was the seventh day and silence could be maintained no more.

All the world then learnt that the Russian Peasant Party had held its convention in our metropolis, and all the previous precautions had been vain. What the upshot of this premature publication was

I have never known; but whenever I read of the hideous tortures which our ally the Czar inflicts upon those whom he believes are striving to obtain some modicum of freedom, and think of the devoted men and women I met in that little hall in Notting Hill, I shudder. Carelessness in such matters may lead to such horrible results.

I am inclined to believe that that meeting I attended in that little hall was one of the most noteworthy at which I ever assisted, and Green, my sole English companion, is, I know, of the same opinion. The President of the occasion was our friend Roubanovitch. Tall, powerful, and dark, this Russian revolutionary is a remarkable figure. He is not only a very capable conspirator—he has more than once visited St. Petersburg of late years at the hourly risk of his life—but he is an admirable writer and most impressive orator in French. When I first heard him speak in that tongue at an open-air meeting during the International Congress of Amsterdam I thought I had never heard any one, not even Andreas Scheu or Bepin Chandra Pal, who was so complete a master of a tongue not his own. There is nobody in Europe, not Plechanoff, or Stepniak, or Kropotkin, or Volskovsky, who has done so much to keep public opinion well informed as to the real condition of the mass of the voiceless peasant peoples of Russia as Roubanovitch.

Though a Social-Democrat myself, I had always argued in the International Socialist Bureau and elsewhere in favour of the fair representation of this Peasants Revolutionary Party at the Congress and on the Bureau; not unfrequently, I fear, to the annoyance of the straiter sect of my own party. But it has always seemed to me impossible to deal with a country like Russia, which is obviously in a very different stage of social development from that which exists in Western Europe, upon any cut-and-

dried plan. The first duty in Russia is to encourage the spirit of revolt, and the organisation of that spirit among the lowest grade of the population, into an effective protest against the existing system.

Therefore, I always stood by Roubanovitch in the discussions and votings at the International gatherings, and I had found that he had a very much clearer and more capable view of what economic revolution really meant, alike in theory and in practice, than German, French, Austrian, and Belgian leaders, who are eager to accept obvious non-Socialists or even anti-Socialists as fitting representatives of the most advanced school of revolutionary thought, if they happen to be deputies or members of Parliament in their respective countries. To that miserable kotowing to the success of compromise and treachery Roubanovitch has never condescended, and I much prefer, I confess, the irreconcilable revolutionist to the truckling philosopher or dexterous politician of affairs.

Roubanovitch married an old friend of ours long since dead, the charming Madame Polonsky, widow of the man who blew up the Winter Palace. Now that was a fine piece of terrorism, if you like. It was thought necessary to strike a blow of a serious character at the Czar and his court. Polonsky enlisted as a cook in the service of the household, became, of course, in that capacity, familiar with the goings in and comings out, the meals and the manners of the household, and, at the critical moment, blew a fine hole from the cellarage right straight through to the roof. The sensation produced, though now forgotten, was very great at the time.

Mme. Polonsky was got out of Russia and settled in Paris. At her flat there, at the top of the Rue St. Jacques, the Russians of that day used

to foregather in numbers which crowded the none too spacious apartment she occupied to repletion. There they stayed until all hours of the night and morning, some indeed taking up their bed afterwards for the time being on the drawing-room floor. How Mme. Polonsky contrived to keep herself ever fresh, and bright, and charming, and tactful for all those long hours, in spite of the cloud of cigarette smoke and the din of rapid conversation, we never could understand; but her powers of hospitable entertainment were inexhaustible and she was a most delightful specimen of her race and sex.

But I return to that memorable collection of Russian patriots in London. Both the meeting of the Revolutionists and that of the Russian Social Democrats at an earlier date, some of whom were members of the First Douma, can now only be recalled with the deepest sorrow. These last, who had acted in strict accordance with the rules and the edicts promulgated by the Czar, who were cheered by us as the hope of the new period in the new Russia emancipated from the horrors of Czardom and Cossackdom and Moucharderie — what has become of them? The blackest of reaction has settled down upon their country. The ablest of those who believed in all good faith that they might help in peacefully transferring their belated autocratic despotism into some form of civilised constitutionalism, have been either tortured to death in prison or are miserably awaiting a similar fate.

It brings home to me and other Englishmen what Russian tyranny really means when we have associated in close friendship with the very same men and women who have been thus ruthlessly done to death, for no worse crime than asking for, and co-operating to secure, liberties which our forefathers conquered for us generations and even

centuries ago. And the monstrous injustice of it all is felt even more keenly in the case of women than in that of men. At the meeting at Notting Hill Vera Figner was present: a quiet, self-restrained, dignified woman. She had been seized quite young, and for twenty-two years had been imprisoned in the terrible fortress of Schusselburg for no offence whatsoever, according to the view of any government in Europe outside of Russia herself. When I meet and talk with such a noble woman as this, who, after all these long years of incarceration and suffering, still maintains her intellectual and moral power unshaken, and is as much devoted to her cause as ever, then I cannot but recognise how trifling are our efforts for the emancipation of the people in comparison with what she has undertaken and endured. And Vera Figner, imposing figure as she is, is but one of a great and glorious company of martyrs who have deliberately risked life, and even more than life, to obtain only those political liberties of which our own people, who have got them already by no effort of their own, make such surprisingly little use.

Talking over the condition of Russia with such men as Stepniak, Kropotkin, and Tchaykovsky, and then with Plechanoff and Roubanovitch, Volskovsky, Issaieff, and even Meliukoff, it is impossible not to be struck with the apparently relentless destiny which pursues the Russian people and renders even her connection with the rest of Europe another agency to increase and perpetuate the terrible economic and social oppression which crushes down her vast population. When the Russian upheaval began after the war with Japan I hoped and even believed that it might lead to some permanent advantage for all Russia.

I admit that I misread the situation. There was

no real backing among the masses for such an overthrow of despotism as we hoped for. The Social-Democratic members of the Douma, whom we gladly met and entertained cordially, if not as handsomely as we could have wished, were the representatives of but a small minority of the Russian workers. The industrial proletariat of the great cities, though a native, was not, so to say, an indigenous proletariat. It was a Fourth Estate born out of due time, owing to the importation of foreign capital, the superficial absorption of foreign ideas, the adoption of foreign methods of mine and factory organisation. Hundreds of millions of pounds from the West had been devoted to a furious effort to force fully developed capitalism and its attendant railway transport upon the whole country. Yet, from one end of Russia to the other, the industrial element of the population in the modern sense bore no sort of proportion to the agricultural. Not 15 per cent of the entire community could either read or write.

Witte's policy of feverish and subsidised development of State manufactures, of the construction of State railways, and of the wholesale encouragement of State drunkenness was mistaken by some Socialists, particularly in the United States, for a step towards that organised and educated Socialism which can only come when economic forms as well as general intelligence are ripe for the transformation. This was certainly not the case in Russia. Moreover, State demand and State supply both fell off as the importation of capital slackened; while the mischief done to agriculture and the agriculturists by the depletion of the peasants' resources it may take two or three generations to repair. My friend Professor Issaieff, the famous ex-Professor of Political Economy at the University of St. Petersburg, from whom Professor

Meliukoff obtained the statistics for which he has received so much credit, told me at the very time when the wealth of Russia was being lauded to the skies by interested financiers and a suborned press, that it must inevitably take, even then, many hundreds of millions of roubles to put back Russian agriculture, the mainstay of the whole Empire, where it had been twenty years before.

Enormous loss of cattle, almost universal deterioration of the soil, exhaustion of such petty savings as the peasants had accumulated in better times, spread of money-lending and forestalling in the most ruthless shape, alcoholism fostered from existing as a fitful malady into being a permanent disease—such was the real condition of rural Russia as depicted to me at the time of the commencement of the disgraceful war in the Far East.

But Western Europe welcomed anything which should help to remove the standing scandals and menace of Russian despotism, regardless of the still more dangerous development of aggressive militarism nearer to hand. So atrocious was the Russian régime admitted to be at this time that even the *Times* in a prominent leading article formulated an elaborate apology for the assassination of Archduke Sergius and Bobrikoff and Plehvé. The defeat of a great European power by the rising militarism of an ambitious and aggressive Asiatic nation was therefore welcomed in London regardless of consequences, and led to the Anglo-Japanese treaties, the end of which is not yet.

And all the time matters in Russia were going from bad to worse. The crushing defeat in Manchuria, which quite possibly but for interference might later have ended in a Muscovite victory, and the uprising in Russia itself, which it was hoped would help forward progress, only strengthened for the time being the most frightful

reaction seen since the days of Ivan the Terrible. Men who had taken the lead in strikes, and had returned peacefully to their work thinking that the whole matter was at an end, were arrested months and even years afterwards, and nobody knew or knows what became of them. We only guess. The political champions of the people shared the same fate, and all that remains to recall the stupendous efforts and sacrifices of those years of desperate conflict is the mockery of the Douma, which at present is powerless, and the fortifying of a bureaucracy and a police against which it seems almost hopeless to strive.

Our upper classes support what they believe to be the winning side, and, contemptuous of the glorious fight which the unconquerable few are still waging against a more frightful tyranny than ever, leading members of our aristocracy and of our political factions hasten in batches to St. Petersburg in order to prostrate themselves before the worst despot of modern times and to offer their humble services, for heavy pecuniary considerations, in "developing" the Russian Empire against the interests of its people. There was some excuse for French statesmen when, abandoned by Great Britain and threatened by Germany, they encouraged the thrifty French peasantry and bourgeoisie to put their savings at the disposal of a virtually bankrupt Empire, in order that at the critical moment they might rely upon Russian assistance against the dominant German power in Europe. There was and is no such excuse for Englishmen in thus upholding before the world such infamies as Nicholas II.'s Government stands for.

But more is going on than will suit the financiers of any nation, and the day of the Revolutionist may not be so far off as it seems. The famines afflict-

ing Russia have assumed Indian proportions, and the causes of this calamity are very similar to those which make Hindostan a byword for pauperisation. Russia is undoubtedly a country rich in potentialities, but this is mostly where there are no people. Where the population is comparatively dense there, as we see, poverty reigns supreme, and death by starvation is knocking at the door of millions of huts. Russia owes Western Europe at the present time certainly not less than one thousand millions sterling, the interest upon which cannot be put at less than £40,000,000 a year.

Here is an economic drain of the most formidable character, which, deducting the export of gold, and the amount reborrowed in Western capitals to pay this interest, can only be met by the export of produce on a sufficient scale to cover the balance due. If this is not done, national bankruptcy lies immediately ahead, and such a shock would this give to all the Bourses of Europe, and particularly to the Bourse of Paris, that it is difficult to overestimate what the effect would be on Western Europe. In fact, at this moment Russia is being depleted and her population starved and driven into a revolt of despair in order to keep faith with the lenders of the West—mostly the small French bourgeoisie and peasantry!

I cannot understand how it is that under such circumstances so many Russian friends of mine have become Liberals in England. Nobody could deny Stepniak's ability and sound knowledge. When I first made his acquaintance at a great demonstration in Hyde Park on his arrival here from Italy, where he had written *La Russia Sotteranea*, after his escape from the hunt for him when he had "removed" the governor of the great prison, there could not have been a more deter-

mined revolutionary. The way in which his assassination of General Mezentzoff for flogging political prisoners, men and women, in gaol was prepared for by himself and organised by his friends, was a masterpiece of daring and successful conspiracy. I have greatly admired it as bearing out the view I have always taken, and upheld in my article on "The Art of Assassination," that the cord or the knife, though requiring closer proximity and more elaborate preparation, is a much more certain weapon for getting rid of a high-placed criminal or treacherous comrade than the revolver, the bomb, or even poison.

That was Stepniak's opinion. He practised with a sharp dagger for months upon trunks of trees at every possible angle so that he might "mak' sicker" when he once got within striking distance of the doomed man. Then, though Stepniak himself might also lose his life, there could be no chance whatever that the Governor would escape. Having thus carefully awaited and made ready for his opportunity, the fateful day at last came, and Stepniak's mission had been so arranged that he and the Governor met as this functionary came out of the prison. It was all over at one blow struck with all Stepniak's herculean strength. Within a minute the conspirator was in a drosky driven by a friend, and drawn by a fine black horse, actually taken out of the Imperial stables. They went off at full speed. So admirably had all precautions been taken, that not another drosky of any kind could be found within a mile and a half of the scene of the execution, and Stepniak happily made his escape to the West without interference. All St. Petersburg, it was said at the time, sympathised with the successful assassin. The secret of Stepniak's real name was well kept until he died.

Then, to my great surprise, his Russian friends proclaimed it to the world, regardless, as it seemed to me, of the clues it might thus give even years later.

Stepniak was about five feet nine inches in height, but immensely powerful, with a broad, imposing forehead and face of the Kalmuck type. He seemed to me a splendid type of the Muscovite revolutionary, and, in regard to Russia itself, he remained, as far as I knew, revolutionary to the end. But I could not but be struck with his change of opinion in regard to England, where he unquestionably mistook political rights and freedom of speech and writing and combination for economic emancipation or the power to obtain it. This, of course, is not true of Rothstein and other thorough Marxists on the one side, nor of the Russian Revolutionary Peasant Party, whatever may be their drawbacks in other respects, on the other.

The story of Azeff is perhaps the most remarkable in all the gloomy annals of secret societies and spy treachery. The successful career of the Government agent Le Caron was perhaps the nearest approach, and that still at a very long distance, to the record of Azeff's almost inconceivable story of criminal espionage and organised assassination. Even now that we know all about it, the tale seems to pass the bounds of the credible. That the same man should be the deliberate plotter who contrived the desperate and successful conspiracies for the taking off of the Archduke Sergius, Plehvé, and Bobrikoff, yet at one and the same time be the tool of the Russian Third Section, receiving pay to incite and betray his comrades in conspiracy to the scaffold is the most astounding case of, in every sense, double-dyed treachery that ever was heard of. I have met many who knew Azeff well. Not one of them mistrusted him in the least.

Madame Mahlberg, the revolutionary Finnish leader, used to receive Azeff into her family, and treated him as an intimate friend of the house. She told me that he never gave her the slightest ground for suspicion, and that she trusted him implicitly; so much so that, when his treachery was exposed, she felt a shock of horror at the dangerous secrets, and still more dangerous letters to sympathisers, with which he had been entrusted. It seems impossible to fit the two parts which Azeff played in with one another. For that he did have control over the assassination plans which ended in the death of the eminent personages named above is beyond all question, and the full explanation of his object in the desperate double game he played has certainly never been given to the satisfaction of plain Western mind. I asked whether he was fond of money. I was told "no": he lived in quite a simple way, and appeared to have no greed for gain.

Why then should he play false to both sides? Azeff, I believe, still asserted he did not. But the evidence against him was too strong. I asked Mme. Mahlberg what she thought. "I believe it was his love of unseen power," she replied, "and a sort of lust for blood." That Bourtseff's account of him is correct there is no reason now to doubt; but from what I hear full disclosure of all the underground workings has not yet been, and possibly may never be, made. Quite enough is known, however, in my opinion, to put the Russian police agent and Nihilist conspirator Azeff ahead of any of his tribe in either the ancient or the modern world. I have known, and have studied the careers of, some terrible scoundrels at one time or another, but not one was within hail of this extraordinary Muscovite.

It seems that Bourtseff, whose remarkable

exposures of the deeds of the miscreant Azeff and other spies have created such a sensation, not so much in Great Britain, strange to say, as on the continent of Europe and in America, has been greatly discouraged at the slight effect produced on the Russian Government by his publication of the facts. He says now he intends to go back to Russia, in order that he may be arrested and the whole horrible story of treachery and delation may be brought out in open Court. Probably the Russian Government will take good care that this opportunity is never given to the ardent patriot who is ready to take any risk in order to advance the cause of freedom in his country. When once the Czar has a man of Bourtseff's character, with Bourtseff's records of official crime, safely under lock and key, he is careful not to let him out again except for burial.

The very ugly Malecka affair has shown clearly the sort of justice which even British subjects have meted out to them in Russia with the consent of our Foreign Office. For there is no doubt whatever on the part of Miss Malecka and her friends that had it not been for the vehement public agitation got up in Great Britain she would have been sent off to Siberia without any hope of return. Sir Edward Grey's full despatches on this matter I venture to predict will never be published. It would be interesting to print them, if they were, side by side with Lord Palmerston's despatches and letters on a similar occasion. The fact that Miss Malecka, being wholly innocent, was "pardoned" by the Czar for purely political reasons does not excuse the action of the Russian authorities in the least.

It seems almost inconceivable that such a reign of reactionist terror should be possible even in Russia at the beginning of the twentieth century.

But the difficulty of combining in one great movement for emancipation such a population as that of the Russian Empire is very great. We are apt to forget how many furious risings of the peasants and the jacquerie in England and France were ruthlessly suppressed before the mass of the people in either country could shake off the feudal domination. And modern inventions and discoveries, though they have placed some of the resources of civilisation at the disposal of revolutionaries, and have rendered the success of partial revolt perhaps more probable for a time, have put still greater resources at the command of the Governments, which are ready to use them to the full extent against the people.

CHAPTER XVII

THE GERMAN MENACE

"WHY do you hate the Germans so much?" This silly question has been asked me a good many times of late years. It seems to be imagined by those who allow their sentiment to overpower their reason in the matter of peace at any price, that a nation which makes ready to meet the threats of a great and aggressive militarist government must of necessity be in the wrong, and that wholesale surrender by the non-aggressive nationality is the only way by which to avert war. That any man who counsels vigorous resistance must be actuated by downright hatred towards the people of the country the policy of whose masters he is anxious should be defeated, extreme pacifists take for granted. It is safe to say, nevertheless, that, as I have pointed out elsewhere, not only was there no ill-feeling between the French and the English peoples at the time of the Fashoda incident, but that, so far as England was concerned, the French were more popular here than the men and women of any other nationality. Nobody can deny that there have been race and religious hatreds, and that such hatreds exist even to-day, as we need not go farther than Ireland or Austria, Belgium or Turkey, to discover. But there is nothing of the kind between us and the Germans. On the contrary, the relations between the two peoples, in spite of all that has come and gone, are surprisingly good.

It is the fact also that there is no more popular man in the United Kingdom at this moment than the Kaiser's own brother, Prince Henry, himself the active head of the German navy.

When, therefore, I have been asked why I hate the Germans, because I have advocated the permanent maintenance of a fleet sufficiently powerful to secure our domination of the narrow seas under all circumstances, and the safety of the trade routes so far as this may be achieved, my answer is simply to laugh. For it is quite ludicrous to imagine for a moment that an active Social-Democrat, and therefore a man pledged up to the hilt against war, can hate any nation. We are of necessity Internationalists, and I personally feel myself as much at home in Berlin, Hamburg, Munich, Dresden, or Stuttgart as I do in Paris, Lyons, Lille, Bordeaux, or Marseilles; more at home, certainly, than I did in London during the continuance of the South African War, when I honestly admit I hated a great number of my own countrymen as an ignorant and brutal set of reactionists.

All international Socialists respect and admire the German working classes more than any other set of toilers in the world. Their increase of strength is our increase of strength; their wonderful self-control and discipline are models for our Party in every nation; their admirable organisation and political persistence, their literary work and their newspaper press are what we ourselves hope to see here when we, like they, have got a decent system of national education and recognise that, disgusting and tyrannous as Prussian militarism is, even that discipline is better than no discipline at all. We feel at liberty to criticise German Social-Democrats, at times, for what seem to us the defects of their qualities; but we are only too glad to recognise that they lead humanity at

this moment in its steady march towards the new period.

When this year 4,250,000 electors over twenty-five years of age, trained soldiers to a man, cast their votes for the Social-Democratic revolutionary candidates in Germany, a feeling of exultation and of approaching triumph swept through the educated workers of every civilised nation. When 350,000 unarmed troops marched in military array through the streets of Berlin, without speaking a word from one end of the great parade to the other, there was not one of us but felt that within a very few years the splendid German people would be masters of their own destinies and would control their own policy to the great advantage of all their neighbours. Fully one-third of German manhood and the German army already sympathises with and votes for Social-Democracy, and the rising generation between eighteen and twenty-five is more Socialist in proportion than those who are entitled to exercise the ballot. Moreover, they have achieved this amazing success under the most difficult circumstances, nearly all their best-known and most trusted leaders having passed away. Kaisers, Bismarcks, Caprivis, Bülows, pass, pass, pass and disappear, but the great host of the German Social-Democracy marches on, more numerous, better disciplined, more confident than ever. It has succeeded in convincing even the vigorous and self-sacrificing Gustave Hervé that, sound as anti-militarism and even anti-nationalism may be in his opinion, it is folly to divorce the industrial movement of the people from political action.

To talk of my hatred of Germans as Germans is absurd. So little do I hate them that if the German Social-Democracy could and would help to overthrow our upper classes in this island for us, by an invasion across the North Sea, I for one should

welcome their coming, and would give them all the assistance in my power. But at present they have quite enough to do to fight their own battles, and, unfortunately, we on our side can do very little to help them, and have even taken of late years to exporting English blacklegs to compete against them.

All this is quite commonplace to Socialists, as also is the fact that, when the thing is put to the test, Socialists alone are the true peacemakers. We would give up armaments, sweep away militarism, and put an end to competition in all countries upon the grounds of economy in its widest sense, as well as of humanity. But at present, things being as they are, we have decided at all International Congresses that, as we are Internationalists and not Anti-nationalists, a national citizen army in each nationality to be used for its own defence is desirable. In all countries we oppose war: in all countries we denounce aggression.

Why then advocate a powerful navy for Great Britain when such a weapon may seem a menace to other countries? To which I reply that to us a great navy stands in the place of a citizen army, as, being dependent for six-sevenths of our food on foreign countries, we could be starved out even by a chance superiority at sea; and because conscription or compulsory service not being adopted here, the country is liable to sudden and partially successful attack even by an inferior force, should the mastery of the narrow seas pass from us temporarily.

Having held this opinion for forty years, I saw no reason to depart from it simply because of pacifist clamour and the furious attacks upon me by a minority of the party to which I myself belong. But the question became an exceedingly pressing

one when the German Government told the world plainly, after a long and systematic campaign on the part of university professors and the violent German Navy League, that it meant to have a fleet equal to occasioning us very serious anxiety and proceeded to borrow £50,000,000 in order to carry out this programme. The attitude and writings of the professors were, to my mind, specially significant.

It was the professors and historians who worked up the war of 1870 in their class-rooms and in their books, long before Bismarck set to work to realise their pan-German aspirations in active politics and on the field of battle. They spared no pains to rouse the educated youth against France and, before France, against Austria, by the most persistent and unscrupulous, if superficially learned, incitement to national hatred and national aggrandisement ever known. And they were successful. When, therefore, many years ago I saw the next generation of professors engaged in precisely similar work, but this time against England as the enemy, I knew what we had to expect, and my old friend Liebknecht's warning against aggressive German chauvinism was always ringing in my ears.

But in fact I had little need of warning. I had myself watched and commented upon the Prussian policy of cool, carefully-prepared, ruthless aggression from the early sixties, at which period I visited Germany frequently, onwards. Schleswig-Holstein, the campaign of 1866, the war of 1870–1871, the threats against France of 1874 and 1884, the intrigues in South Africa and South America, all showed that Germany was acting throughout on the lines of a considered programme which had been rendered possible of accomplishment by her marvellous development in industry and accumu-

lated wealth since 1874–1878. There were, however, two schools of men of peace, one of which argued that Germany did not really mean business or would not stand the strain. This was the view acted upon by the Conservatives for five years, seeing that, although they kept up a strong fleet, they never openly challenged the German Government as to the object of all these preparations.

The other idea was that the German Social-Democrats could check any determined act of hostility against either England or France. This latter theory I never believed for a moment. But I asked Bebel and Singer and others point-blank at Brussels whether anything could be done by them if a serious attempt were made, by Socialists in France and England, to check any counter hostile move. "Rather revolution than war!" as Vaillant and Hervé both cry. They told me plainly "No": that at the first call to arms they would be unable to check mobilisation, though, as in 1870, they would be prepared to run great risks by way of protest. What might happen later nobody could foretell. Those who understand what military discipline on the Prussian model means, and the manner in which martial law is applied by German officers, must know full well that this is true. The German army, in the first instance, at any rate, would march, Social-Democrats and all, where it was ordered to march, although nowadays there could be no more unpopular campaign, so far as the bulk of the German people are concerned, than a war against France.

But if the German Social-Democrats could not hope to check a war on land, much less could they arrest an attack by sea. The German nation has no influence upon its foreign policy nor any real control over the public funds. If the German Emperor and the Federal Council decide upon war,

war there will be. Moreover, the increase of the Socialist Party in Germany, beneficial as it is from many points of view, may quite probably hasten on the international crisis. For my own part I believe it will. The Hohenzollerns and their great array of officers and bureaucrats will never sit down quietly and wait until the Social-Democratic propaganda, pressure of taxation, rise of prices and disgust with military methods, give the revolutionary section a clear majority not only in the country but in the army itself.

We may all fully rely upon it that the leaders of German official opinion are even more keenly alive to the progress made by Socialism, and what it betokens in the future, than any foreigners can be. They know quite well that the increase of the Socialist vote at the same yearly ratio as that for the past few years, which there seems every reason to expect will continue, carries with it sooner or later the downfall of the German Empire in its present shape. It was internal, not external, policy which induced Napoleon III. to drift into war. It may be internal even more than external policy which will hurry on the German plans for dominance in Europe and "a place under the sun." A great and successful war, with a vast Charlemagnic Empire as its objective, with German dominance in Europe as its result, might head back Socialism for some time. That is the calculation. It is rather significant that, writing to me on the subject of this same German menace, the late Sir Charles Dilke based his conviction as to the maintenance of peace solely on the certainty, to his mind, that the Kaiser himself was devoted to a pacific policy and would never allow his hand to be forced. That seemed to me a very slender thread on which to hang so important a conclusion in affairs of the very first magnitude.

For my part, I have always thought that the length and vehemence of the attacks upon me by German statesmen and in the official German press whenever I myself have shown, from the democratic standpoint, the absolute necessity for Great Britain to maintain herself in such a position that she could not only protect her own shores and make any attack hopeless, but also help the small States and her allies, proved conclusively that the calculations of the German Foreign Office and military party were precisely those which I took them to be. Otherwise, why should plain letters in the *Times* and *Morning Post* from a mere Socialist outsider, stating undoubted facts and drawing indisputable conclusions, proposing also, what he had no power to influence in any way, a £100,000,000 4 per cent loan to be devoted exclusively to naval purposes, the interest covered by an increasing ship-tax on incomes above, say, £500 a year,—why should such wholly unauthorised suggestions call for so much and such widespread misrepresentation and abuse?

It is certain that hostilities would not be commenced if Germany could get all she wanted in Europe, without moving a ship or a man, by merely threatening diplomatically; but there would certainly come a moment when the limit of surrender would be reached. For a long time, until a great portion of their programme was carried out, the Germans denied that there was any aggressive intention on their side at all. Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman believed them, shipbuilding was curtailed even after the failure to bring about any arrangement at The Hague, and Mr. Lloyd George informed the whole world in his interview with the correspondent of the German-inspired *Neue Freie Presse* at Carlsbad that we had given up our pretensions to pre-eminence at sea. We seem to be paying very heavily for all this pacifism at the

present time. But Mr. George himself has been forced to eat his own words, to proclaim himself a big navy man, and, amusingly enough, to exasperate the whole of German officialism by so doing more than all the plain-speaking of others had done before.

For me the whole trouble had a direct personal significance. I was denounced, especially by the foreign refugees in our Party, as an inveterate firebrand. The men and women who unquestionably owed their freedom from danger and the probability of death and torture to our right of asylum, backed up by the guns of the British fleet, spoke and wrote about me on this issue with a vehemence and acrimony which left nothing to desire, and the leading personages of the Labour Party rivalled the absconding political immigrants in the acerbity of their diction. I was told very frankly, even by many who sympathised with me, that by upholding what I contend is the sound democratic doctrine, the right and duty, namely, of every nationality to protect itself against attack from without, I had forfeited all right to represent Socialism in any way. A few who had learnt all they knew about Socialism from me relieved their feelings in the same manner.

The Labourists, as usual, were not logical. They declared, it is true, that it made no difference whatever to the wage-earners whether German despotism dominated here in place of British capitalist constitutionalism : a contention which may be fortified by arguments difficult to meet. The slums of our great cities and their miserable inhabitants are but poor testimony to the value of political liberty as against German regimentation. When, however, it came to voting in the House of Commons, this extreme pacifism was carefully dropped. Our working-class representatives had none of the

courage of highly-cultured Gustave Hervé. They meekly said that what they objected to was not an adequate but an excessive navy, and all their members who sat for dockyard and arsenal seats, etc., voted for the armaments which, as a party, they so sternly opposed! I am bound to say that neither the vituperation of the foreigners nor the abuse and misrepresentation of my own Liberal-Labour countrymen affected me in the least.

I reasserted my opinion that a £100,000,000 Navy Loan used exclusively for the strengthening and manning of the fleet, followed up by the establishment of a genuine citizen army, wholly free from militarist tyranny, could alone enable us to use the growing power of our democracy for the general good. By far the greater part of the money raised, moreover, would be spent on the employment of home labour; and the training of a citizen army would do a little to check physical degeneration and enable the working class to make head against their employers and the national mercenary army with better and more effective weapons than passive resistance and domestic starvation.

I was supported in these contentions by the men and women with whom I had worked in the Socialist propaganda for more than a quarter of a century. Quelch and Lee, and Irving and Knee, and many others were on the same side with myself, not because they were Jingoes, still less because they accepted my views on personal grounds—that is not at all the way with Social-Democrats—but because they, anti-Imperialists to a man, believe with me that our influence in Europe is, on the whole, favourable to democracy; that the Right of Asylum is worth defending at any cost; that German domination on the Continent might easily check for a time the growth of Socialism; that the state of things that would be brought about in this

island by the loss of the command of the sea and consequent starvation of our people would tend to anarchy, followed by dictatorship, rather than to a complete democratic industrial revolution; and that a thoroughly-trained citizen force, armed with the best weapons, is the only guarantee in these days for fair treatment of the workers by the dominant class as well as for permanent national safety.

Those arguments are good enough for me. I was warned, nevertheless, that if I ventured to assert them upon the public platform it would be the worse for me. In particular, that if in the historic Free Trade Hall in Manchester I ventured to speak in this sense, first, I should be howled down, and then perhaps suffer personal chastisement. That sort of nonsense has no effect on me.

There was nothing intrepid in the course I took; for there was really no danger. At any rate, I went and spoke in the Free Trade Hall. The place was packed to suffocation, the meeting was quite open to all; questions could be asked after my address, as usual with us, by any one present. What was the result? Just precisely what I anticipated. I never had a finer reception nor a more enthusiastic audience in all my life. Yet I made no secret of the fact that I stuck steadily to my opinions, and, in order to make my anti-Imperialist position unmistakable at the same time, I declared that I was in favour of speedy withdrawal both from India and Egypt. There were no questions, though I myself appealed for them. The whole thing was a great success.

People did not believe that the men who had been in the first rank of opposition, at great risk to themselves, during the whole of the South African War, and had never failed to denounce our bleeding to death of India and our treaty-breaking con-

quest and retention of Egypt, had suddenly turned Chauvinist in relation to Germany. It was just the same everywhere. I do not believe that any man in this island has addressed larger or more enthusiastic audiences than I have during the past three or four years. On many occasions more people have been turned away than found admittance to the halls, large as these were. Yet I have never once had any unpleasantness or trouble whatever in relation to my persistent advocacy of an overwhelmingly powerful fleet and a national citizen army. I have had, of course, too much experience to believe that great and enthusiastic public meetings mean large votes at an election, or even the agreement of all present with the opinions enounced. But that in Manchester, Liverpool, Glasgow, London, Leeds, and Bradford, not to speak of other towns, I should have been left unheckled on these important questions, surely proves conclusively that the public is not so deficient in understanding as some imagined.

But the facts remain, and at the time of writing are unchanged. The German Empire, as represented by its dominant military class, by its official press, and by the talk of German bourgeois households, tells us as a nation plainly, by actions that speak much more loudly than words, that we have either to give way to German demands or—to fight. That is what it all means and has meant for the past ten years. Had our successive Governments recognised this from the first, and had the Liberal Government, more particularly, declared at The Hague and afterwards that, the Germans having refused to come to any arrangement, Great Britain took up the Prussian challenge, and had proceeded at once to show that, under no circumstances, would we go back upon the policy which August Bebel, at the time when the threatening

competition in shipbuilding began, said in the Reichstag, we should inevitably adopt—the policy, namely, of laying down two keels for one—peace would have been assured for our day and generation, and all this bitter recrimination would have come to an end. That is my firm conviction as a revolutionary Social-Democrat who may claim to have made some study of foreign affairs. It is absurd to suppose that pacifism on our side has the slightest mollifying effect upon the policy of the Prussian militarist bureaucracy. The moment English battleship and cruiser construction slackened, that moment Germany chose to push ahead her programme with greater vigour. Why not? Pay or play is the rule in this internecine strife of national aggression and national defence.

We have had tolerably good experience of this ourselves. "Peace is an excellent thing," as Philip of Macedon wrote to the Opuntian Locrians when they remonstrated with him as he went forth to war. But this philosophic reflection had no effect whatever upon his policy. The only obstacle which would have stayed his career was an army better than his own. Germany is the modern Macedon, and though Kaiser Wilhelm is neither a Philip nor an Alexander, he is at bottom a man of peace of about the same kidney as those two insatiable expansionists. What Germany can gain by peace she will acquire pacifically; what she cannot obtain by persuasion she will, when quite ready, take by main force. This good old rule, this simple plan, we ourselves have adopted and followed up so long and so successfully, outside Europe, that it does not lie with us to complain if another rising commercial and industrial Empire takes a leaf out of our book.

It is for this reason I never could at all understand the policy of my French friends, more

especially Vaillant and Jaurès, when they were perpetually preaching peace at any price in regard to Germany. I went so far as to tell the latter, I remember, when lunching alone with him at the Café d'Orsay a few years ago, that if he went on as he was going, and offered to travel to Berlin in order to preach peace at a time when all the menace of war was coming from the other side of the frontier, he would, I was afraid, only encourage Germany to persist in her preparations, would weaken his own absolutely sound as well as courageous and magnificent protests against the sordid campaign of aggression in Morocco, and would help on a dangerous revival of the chauvinist spirit in France herself.

There is no more objectionable being on the planet than the man of "I told you so." I quite admit that. Yet the pacifist propaganda in France, headed by two such able but such different men as Jaurès and Hervé, has resulted just as I foresaw it would. Germany has vastly strengthened her army against France and her navy against Great Britain, the irrefutable criticisms on the mad Morocco campaign, waged in the interest of international concessionaries and bankers, have failed of effect, and the party of "la Revanche" is far stronger than it has been in my memory. Millerand, who was the principal speaker on my platform in Hyde Park at the great International Demonstration for Socialism, peace, and fraternity in 1896, is now engaged as War Minister in fomenting the war spirit of his countrymen to the full extent of what is possible: ordering the tattoo to be beaten every Saturday through the streets of Paris, backing up the chauvinist feeling in the army itself as vigorously as he can, and generally playing the part of a civilian Boulanger with even greater zest than his unfortunate predecessor in the same office

He has turned "politician," and his Socialism and international harmony have gone to keep company with Aristide—I like to give his first name in this connection — Briand's vehement syndicalism and anarchism. He sees which way the wind is blowing and has set his sails to catch it for his personal craft. But here, at the back of the Socialist of yesterday, stand the Comte de Mun with MM. Maurice Barrès and Déroulède, who now feel, naturally, that their long years of reactionary endeavour have not been spent in vain, and that the thoroughly honest, well-meaning, able and eloquent men of peace have most satisfactorily played into the hands of themselves, the men of war!

The worst of the situation is, that just as the success of Social-Democracy in Germany may push German statesmen into more rapid disclosure of their plans and action upon them, so, in France, the plain facts of the decrease of the French population relatively to the German, and the belief, well-grounded or not, that the French are ahead of the Germans in certain important departments of their military affairs, notably artillery and aviation, may render French chauvinists less inclined to lie low and give way to German diplomacy at the critical moment. Thus it is clear with me that peace-at-any-price in France, like peace-at-any-price here, so far from having tended to bring about a good understanding, has rendered the situation more dangerous than it would otherwise have been.

If Great Britain at the present time had a navy which now and henceforth could keep command of the narrow seas and trade routes, and could at the same time send forth by popular vote a capable and well-equipped army of 300,000 men—the figure M. Clemenceau, ever a close friend of this country, mentioned as indispensable—there would be no great war in Europe nor any humiliating surrender by any

nation. There is not a statesman from the Atlantic Ocean to the Chinese border who is not well aware of that. If public opinion in Great Britain does not as yet recognise this truth, that is due to the fact that the leaders on both sides have carefully abstained from telling their countrymen the real state of the case, and have for the most part left the entire discussion to the press.

There are still some who state in so many words that Germany has nothing to gain by war, and that great nations in these days do not make war upon one another unless there is something important to be obtained by it. But, as already said in another connection, Germany's neighbours have no doubt whatever that she is out upon the prowl. Rotterdam and Antwerp are quite convinced upon this point, and more remote peoples have been discussing with some anxiety which is "the place in the sun" that Germany is eager for and is determined to have. And just at this juncture there comes along a philosophic man of business who tells us all at great length and with a good deal of rather wearyful iteration that he has looked carefully into this matter of war from the point of view of modern industrial and commercial and financial relations, and as Charles Matthews used to say in *Used Up* about the investigation by the leading character into the crater of Vesuvius, "there is nothing in it."

But so say all of us. What is more, we often say the same thing about competitive wage-earning and competitive trade itself. The horrors of peace are worse than the horrors of war. If all mankind would only co-operate for the enjoyment of wealth co-operatively produced, humanity would rise to a level of culture, attainment and delight unknown upon this planet. That is true, demonstrably true, and in theory nobody disputes it.

But nobody acts upon the truth thus theoretically accepted, and we are as yet—I am writing as a Socialist—much too weak, and, what is more important, human evolution has not yet advanced sufficiently far, for us to be able to induce others to accept our view in practice. So with war. Everybody admits that war is terrible, just as a shareholder in Standard Oil, or in Coates' Cotton, or in the London General Omnibus Company might agree that trusts were in the long run opposed to the general interests of the community; but these general ethical conceptions neither stop war nor check the development of industrial monopolies.

Granted, as Mr. Norman Angell contends, that a bombardment of London would upset the market of Berlin, that is a very superficial view of the result of a successful war by Germany against England, or against England and France. Such a successful war would mean that both England, in the main a progressive power, and France, the most civilised nation in Europe, would be placed at the mercy of German militarism, and that the Continent itself would for a full generation be under the same control. In spite of the crisis of 1874, referred to by our competitive pacifist, the success of Prussia against France in 1870 gave Germany a very different position industrially, commercially, and financially, as well as militarily, from that which she occupied before. Prussians anticipated that after the war Berlin, not Paris, would become the capital of Europe. It has not become so; but another successful war might produce this result too. That it would almost certainly transfer the centre of international finance from the Thames and the Seine to the Spree is, I think, beyond dispute; while the annexation of Holland, Belgium, and Denmark, the possession of the Dutch colonies

(if Japan would permit), and the control of Egypt and Asia Minor as an inevitable consequence, would create a huge self-supporting militarist Empire centrally situated, dominating the Baltic, the North Sea, the Channel, and the Mediterranean, and able, if Social-Democracy failed to achieve its objects, to hold its own against any possible counter-attack.

Yet our capitalist peace-persuader thinks to talk German statesmen and generals, and admirals, and iron-masters out of this vast policy of aggrandisement and wealth-absorption by quoting the rate at which Holland and Denmark can borrow money, and by proving that here and there the panic in stocks brought about by war ruins certain shareholders in the victorious country. He even argues against me that I overlook the growth of Socialism in Germany because I say that if we Socialists were to achieve success in England we should be liable to attack by militarist powers. Up to now the German Socialists have been wholly unable to check the wholesale preparations of militarist Germany for aggressive war on land: they are certainly in no case to stop aggressive warfare by sea. It is well, also, in this connection, to bear in mind that the German army carefully blockaded one side of Paris against the Commune while the Versailles troops attacked the other side. If Mr. Angell really wishes to test the value of his influence, let him go and hold forth to the bureaucrats and militarists of Berlin. That is the danger centre of Europe, not London or Paris.

It is quite true that armaments depend upon policy. If we were ready, as a nation, to put our whole policy at the disposal of German statesmen, and to acquiesce in such a programme of expansion as that indicated above, then, no doubt, armaments would be unnecessary, and the whole situation

would be changed. But that is not possible. Even Liberals now see that. And the most crushing criticism on the tide-waiting pusillanimity of both our political parties is that their cowardice and procrastination have landed us in what is practically an alliance with the infamous despotism of Russia, after having previously bound ourselves to the unscrupulous and merciless Japanese annexers of Korea.

Any one would imagine from most of what is said and written on this subject that all these aspirations of Germany for dominance were born yesterday. Not a bit of it. They have been sedulously cultivated and cherished for a full generation at least. Whether the late Lord Salisbury was right or wrong in giving up Heligoland, it is quite certain that when, by one of those Venetian strokes in which he delighted, he sent the British Mediterranean Fleet to pay a visit of ceremony to the inner harbour of Toulon, the first time for forty years, on the very same day when the German and Austrian squadrons jointly celebrated the anniversary of Sedan by a naval review in the North Sea, he showed a capacity to forecast the future which it is unfortunate he could not pass on to his successors. The Prussian bureaucracy, with its attendant Professors, have aimed at attaining the present position in Europe since the victories of 1870–71. The increase of German strength and wealth gave them the basis to work upon: the fatal South African War gave them the excuse for moving on.

At present we are losing in the unavowed conflict, and are likely to lose. When the German Kaiser spoke the other day of the fine physical condition of his people, he said no more than the truth: it was a tacit comparison with the physical decay of the British workers. It is sad to witness the decay of any great nation: it is saddest to

witness the deterioration of our own. Believing, as I do, that the success of German militarism will be injurious to European civilisation, I hope there may yet be time to organise an effective democratic league against it. But this has not been done yet by any means.

CHAPTER XVIII

HENRY LABOUCHERE

I SUPPOSE a more cynical man than Mr. Henry Labouchere never lived. Some of his cynicism may have been put on, but I think that at bottom he believed that the great majority of mankind were actuated in their conduct by the lowest motives, and that the few who were not could only be in reality fools. In fact, so assiduously did he parade this view of life that I have heard men who knew him more intimately than I could claim to know him declare that this was merely his pose, and that it was a great mistake to imagine that his Mephistophelian disregard of all the higher human sentiments was really his sober opinion. All I can say is, I conversed at one time with Mr. Labouchere not infrequently; that, so far as I can remember, I never heard him attribute a good motive to anybody without qualifying this favourable estimate by a more or less satirical remark as to the person's sanity; and that he certainly acted at important periods of his political life as if the whole thing was merely a game, and right and wrong had no meaning for him.

Even when he was going perfectly straight himself, and was both speaking and voting against his party, as in the case of Mr. Gladstone's abominable Coercion policy in Ireland, he did his utmost, so Joseph Cowen used to tell me, to whittle away as

far as possible in the tea-room the effect of his speeches and votes in the House. "I only speak and vote with you," he would declare, "in this ridiculous minority against Coercion because nothing we can say or do will have any serious effect. You no doubt feel strongly about it, and so, in a way, do I. But I certainly should not care to risk the position of the party on the issue, and if there were any danger of our upsetting the Government by our protest, I should probably vote the other way." To those who were really in earnest on the question of the Liberal repression in Ireland, this sort of talk was little short of infuriating.

In fact, Labouchere's cynicism belonged to another race than the curiously mixed breed which now inhabits this island. We have not, as a rule, got the faculty of detachment. We cannot regard events in which we ourselves are taking part, or our own personalities either for that matter, as if we were looking down upon them from another planet. Labouchere could and did. He saw men as trees walking. They were mere mechanical puppets trapesing through their parts, big or little, for his amusement, and he himself was one of the company. True, Swift had in a much higher degree and, of course, with infinitely more imagination, the same power of inspecting mankind as if they were a lot of curious insects, whose bulk and intelligence he could enlarge or belittle at will; and other Englishmen have in a minor degree exhibited the same quality. But to do so was more or less of a mental effort. They were conscious of what they were doing. I do not believe Labouchere was. It came quite natural to him, and he encouraged and developed this inherited tendency. It was the Jew mind, still foreign and Asiatic in spite of centuries of encampment in Western Europe, which gave Labouchere his

singular power of considering all the world as a stage and all the men and women as merely players.

The stories also he was fond of telling against himself were merely practical jokes perpetrated at the expense of the slow mental processes of us outer barbarians. Having no real outlet in public life for his genuine ability, he delighted to trade upon the credulity of his friends and admirers, to watch their puzzled expression, and to sum up in his own thoughts the full effects of his deliberate outrages upon their feelings. Having carefully excluded himself from all chance of high office by his biting jibes at the expense of the Royal family which rules over us, and still more by his half-jocular opposition to any increased payment being granted to its members for services whose value to the community he reckoned as a minus quantity, Labouchere became Labby —knowing very well all the time he could, if he chose, make very short work of those who considered him only in the light of a licensed buffoon.

To such a man the House of Commons was a palace of delight, a never-ending source of malicious enjoyment. More tolerant, if in a way more bitter, than his fellow-Jew Disraeli, he could not even feel contempt for the Tadpoles and Tapers of twelve hundred or five thousand a year, who carried on their quite childishly obvious intrigues around him. They were in politics for business: he was in politics for pleasure. And as these contending microbes of mediocrity amused him he was content just to poke fun at them without giving vent to any word of ferocious Juvenalian satire, a vein of which I always thought lay stored away at the back of his brain. And yet "Labby" was what is called a good party man. As far as

he had principles at all they were democratic and in his queer way he acted up to them. Look through his votes in the House of Commons and you will never find one on what he jocularly called the "wrong" side. Of course, he knew perfectly well that the whole of our party antagonisms are merely the same sort of sham-fight as that which barristers, retained for this or that side in a case, wage in the courts with so much subsidised vigour.

On that head he had no illusions whatever. I have heard him laugh at the mock heroics of faction leaders and scout the very idea that there were any real principles on either side. At most, the English parties gave evidence of tendencies, of the superficial struggle of two political forces with practically the same objects in view as to which should nominally guide a development that neither could control. Yet this same Labouchere backed the Liberals even when voting against them, and stood by Mr. Gladstone, whose verbose rhetorical periods and dexterous casuistry he mercilessly chaffed, even more fiercely in defeat than in victory.

And here I permit myself to recall pleasantly a very different character, Captain O'Shea—a much cleverer man than he ever had the credit for being. One day I went to call upon O'Shea on political business at the House of Commons. When he came out, we went down to the tea-room together. "I have just been listening," said he, "to one of Gladstone's great speeches, some of them say the greatest he has ever delivered. There he stood, his voice quivering with passion, his sentences pouring out in a red-hot flood, his face as pale as ashes, the tears pouring from his eyes—and his tongue in his cheek the whole time." Now, was his tongue thus contemptuously adjusted? Labouchere believed it habitually was; but he regarded

the Grand Old Man as a necessity under the conditions of that day and remained his follower when men of much greater standing in the party failed to understand the situation.

Returning for a moment to O'Shea, it is the fashion to say that Lord Randolph Churchill never met his match in the House of Commons. Of course, that is not true, for Mr. Gladstone himself more than once got much the better of him. But it is close enough to the facts to account for the popular impression. The man, however, who gave Lord Randolph the heaviest knock-down blow he ever encountered was this same Captain O'Shea, whom he was ill-advised enough gratuitously to attack. O'Shea's reply is extremely good reading even to-day; but one sentence in particular engraved itself on my memory as I perused the speech the following morning, and I fancy, even now, I can hear the pleasing Irish accent in which it was rolled forth. "The noble lord, Mr. Speaker, is like an ancient shield. Looked at in front it is resplendent in its magnificence, its whole surface gorgeously ensculped upon, and its entire design most impressive. But turn it round, turn it round, Mr. Speaker, and what will you find? Brass, sir, sounding brass." A very useful composite metal for any politician to possess a good stock of, and one of which certainly Mr. Labouchere himself had no deficient supply. But even the most censorious of Mr. Labouchere's career as jester, politician, journalist, and newspaper proprietor cannot but admit that he stood fast to Home Rule, in spite of all his jests and quips outside the House of Commons, and that he did his very utmost to bring about an arrangement at the critical moment which, had it been successful, would have saved this generation from further discussion of a very prickly question.

At times "Labby" was an exceedingly disappointing person to meet. When I went with Jaurès to see him at his charming house in Palace Yard, I naturally expected to find, though I had never heard him use the language, a thoroughly good French scholar. Jaurès, I know, had the same anticipation. I have rarely heard an Englishman speak French worse. I have since wondered whether this was another of Labby's jokes. It is told of Sala that when the company of the Théâtre Français played in London, just after the downfall of the Commune, he began the speech he delivered, at the banquet given in honour of these celebrated actors, in the worst of English dog-French, and, very gradually improving both his intonation and pronunciation as he went along, wound up, to the astonishment of the French guests, with the latest phrases of fashionable French society given with the best Parisian accent. It may be, as I say, that Labouchere was playing it off in like manner upon Jaurès and me, though this surmise neither of us had afterwards the opportunity of verifying; but beyond all question the French of Labouchere as we heard it that day was the French of Stratford-atte-Bowe.

Worse than this, he treated us both to the sort of petty epigram on affairs of the day which might have been regarded as doubtful wit from a sixth-form public school boy with a reputation for second-hand cleverness. I was amazed. It was quite impossible to get any reason out of him. As one of his cigarettes burnt out he took another, lit that, and when we rose to go politely pressed us to stay a little longer. All this, except the cigarette-smoking, which was always interminable, was so exceedingly different from his ordinary conversation when alone with myself, that to this day I cannot but think that he put on this bad French

and worse conversation for Jaurès's special edification. What induced him to do this I have not the remotest notion. Certainly, I thought he would have been pleased to make a good impression on a man who, however extreme might be his opinions, is one of the most eminent living Frenchmen.

Strange to say, also, my debate with Mr. Labouchere gave me the same idea of deliberate superficiality. The Socialists at Northampton were constantly heckling him and there was no love lost between them. He regarded the whole lot of them as "wasters," and was good enough to express this view of them very clearly to me. However, by continual worrying, they at last, not at all by my wish, forced him into accepting a debate with me in which I was to speak first. The debate came off and the hall was crowded to suffocation. It was hotter and closer than St. James's Hall on my second debate with Mr. Bradlaugh. I stated our economic, historic, and practical position as well as I could, and then Mr. Labouchere tumbled out upon us once more all the alleged impossibilities of realising a form of society in which co-operation should be universal and money exploitation unknown. How human nature was against it. Who would do the dirty work? How would the world be preserved from the ruinous effects of colossal human laziness? What would be the reward of ability? And so on and so on, with very little variation on the old Bradlaugh theme of years before. And so on and so on, I say. It was this, indeed, and more also.

It had been arranged that each speaker should have at his first effort a period, I think, of half an hour. But Labouchere took no account of that understanding. *J'y suis j'y reste* was his motto so far as his stay on that platform was concerned.

Time was no essence of the contract with him, and as the chairman would not interfere and I could not, I thought he would never come to an end. What had been rather amusing became dull and even wearisome from repetition, and I know I do not overstate the case when I say that everybody present was at last consumedly bored. However, the audience stayed on and the discussion was finished up somehow. Of course all our people were quite certain Labouchere was immolated, and Labouchere's adherents were equally convinced, I have no doubt, that I was even more completely destroyed. But my wife and I met him at breakfast at Dr. Shipman's the following morning, and neither of the disputants, so far as I could detect, seemed any the worse for the fray.

Labouchere opened upon me as follows: "The fact is, Hyndman, you remind me of the man who had a hundred thousand horse-power martingale for winning at Monte Carlo. He spent all his own fortune on testing his system, persuaded his wife to risk and lose all hers, borrowed of every friend he had to the full extent that they would lend him, and lost all that. Finally, he was reduced to the last extreme of penury and was dying of want and actual starvation in a garret, when one of his associates who had stuck to him through all his self-inflicted misfortunes went upstairs to see him. The poor foolish fellow was at his last gasp and could scarcely utter a word. But he motioned to his old friend to come near him, croaked out to him hoarsely the words 'The system was all right,' and died." "That story, Labouchere," said I, "you should have told last night." I never saw him nettled before or after. But he did feel at that moment he had missed a chance.

The next time I was with him in Northampton was during the South African War, when a meeting

of protest was to be held by the Radicals and Socialists of the town, at which Messrs. Labouchere, J. M. Robertson, and myself, were the speakers. I had just experienced the delights of facing a furious mob in Trafalgar Square, owing to the lack of any organisation beforehand on the part of the Radicals, to whom the management of the meeting was left, and I asked on my arrival who had charge of this particular gathering in the Town Hall. When I was told that the Radicals had undertaken the entire duties in connection with the demonstration, I felt certain trouble would come of it.

Sure enough it did. No sooner did the three of us get to the hall than we learned very speedily that it had been completely occupied by the Jingoes without a word or act of interference by the Radicals, who really were much the stronger party. So we never got a chance of being heard. Labouchere, who took it all very coolly, was escorted back to the George Hotel, where we were staying, by the police, and I found my way thither myself under the guard of our men of the S.D.F., who would have taken good care to maintain order had they been put in control from the first. These upsets of anti-war meetings were exceedingly unfortunate; for they gave a totally wrong impression as to the strength of the genuine feeling in favour of the war, and in Northampton encouraged the war party quite unduly.

Labouchere and I, after he had spent an hour with some of his leading constituents, sat up talking a great part of the night. This war in South Africa was the only subject I ever heard him really bitter about. He knew the financial rascality which underlay the whole business better than I did, and stood vigorously to his guns throughout, and almost up to the last. I say "almost" up to the last because I have never been able to understand how it was

that, knowing all he told me on that occasion, and having much absolutely damning evidence in his hands, he gave way at last upon the Commission and allowed the principal malefactors to ride off scot free. Certainly, as we sat discussing the whole matter there at the George till the air was as thick as a London fog with the smoke of Labby's cigarettes, I could not have believed that he would fail to push his view right to the end. But that is only one of the extraordinary personal incidents connected with that disastrous South African business, as I note elsewhere.

About this time there was a possibility that, abandoning Burnley, I should come south and fight Northampton as a Social-Democrat. There is not the slightest doubt there was a very good chance of success, with Labouchere friendly. Indeed, the Radicals being favourable to me, as a man who would follow on the Bradlaugh and Labouchere lines of reputation made entirely out of Parliament and directly in the face of bitter opposition and misrepresentation by both the buy-cheap-and-sell-dear factions, I could not well have lost. Labouchere knew this perfectly well, and in spite of his rank individualism gave me distinctly to understand, in private, the seat could be won if the Socialists put me forward; as Mr. Robertson was not a candidate capable of rousing enthusiasm, and Dr. Shipman was simply a good-natured local celebrity.

What followed was very funny, though not a little exasperating to those who understand what an excellent propagandist platform for Socialism might be made of the decadent House of Commons by any one fairly well versed in history and economics, possessed of some power of making an impression upon an educated audience, and not in the very least afraid of encountering prejudice, and even brutality, of the most ignorant type. The Social-

Democratic Federation, however, had put forward as candidate a member of the party named Jones, who had done some good work at various times, was a good speaker, and had obtained enough local popularity to poll 1250 votes at a previous election.

But Jones had "gone Jingo," completely. That made success for him absolutely hopeless. But would he give up in my favour? Not he. Would the local Social-Democrats withdraw him? Not they. Political intelligence has never been an attribute of the rank and file of our party, and I, foolishly, did not care to take the matter into my own hands and push Jones aside as, undoubtedly, I ought to have done. So, though I had withdrawn from Burnley in order to leave a free course to Mr. Philip Stanhope, who had behaved well as an anti-war man—and he was thoroughly beaten in the Khaki election of 1900 by Mitchell notwithstanding!—I had not the chance of a fight at Northampton.

Not until the very last minute, that is to say. Then, barely three weeks before the polling day, our Northampton people actually woke up to the facts of the situation, Jones was induced to cease his obstruction, and they came rushing to me to stand. But of course the extreme anti-war Radicals had then made all their arrangements, which they could not in decency change; the time was too short for proper organisation; for me to poll an absurdly small vote would have been injurious to the party, and besides, I myself felt so sick of all this inconceivable fatuity, on the part of those for whom I had been working for so many years, that I should have declined to go forward, even if the prospect of victory had been much more alluring than it was. When the election was over, when I myself, who had certainly done as much as any

man in or out of Parliament first to try to prevent and then to denounce the costly and disastrous infamy of the war against the Boers, was left still as a voice crying in the wilderness outside the House of Commons, I had another long chat with Labouchere.

I am bound to say he had much the better of me all round. In fact, I went in order to enjoy his sarcasm and satire at my own expense. I knew very well what was coming. The "wasters" of Northampton, and Socialists generally, came in, as I expected, for a scathing fire of chaff, and I myself did not escape his remorseless witticisms for being such a fool as to place any reliance upon such a hopeless crew. As I listened I had the uncanny sensation of having heard every word of it before, from a widely different source, and this indeed was really so. It is only fair to the Northampton Socialists, however, to say that, though they have proved themselves both then and ever since to be the most incompetent and provoking lot of blunderers in politics to be found from one end of Great Britain to the other, and that is saying a very great deal, they established in the Pioneer Boot Works, under the management of Mr. Gribble, by far the most successful co-operative business which has ever been set on foot in connection with Socialism in Great Britain. The profits, amounting already to two or three hundred pounds a year, go wholly and solely to the funds of the British Socialist Party, as they did formerly to those of the S.D.F. So Mr. Labouchere's Socialist "wasters" of Northampton are not quite so incapable as he made them out to be, or as they showed themselves in politics, Gribble himself being one of those same "wasters" and a working man.

But the truth of the matter, of course, is that

"Labby" knew next to nothing about working men, either as individuals or as a class. They stood outside the range of his inspection of humanity, except when he needed them for some personal service, annoyed him by inordinate and undue delay in the carrying out of some work he wanted done —as in doing up his house; when he asked them why they did not furnish the premises for themselves, as they evidently intended to stay there permanently—or at such times as he had to solicit their "vote and interest" to return him as member of Parliament to represent them! Competition was good for these necessary slave-ants. But for that they would develop colossal laziness and other bad qualities to an extent sufficient to rot out the planet.

Labby could no more conceive, democrat as he was in theory, that these inferior humans had the right, as well as the power, if they would but summon up their intelligence and call stoutly upon their courage, to stand on the same social level as himself, than he could believe that monkeys would rise up and thrust him from his seat. Human nature to him involved production for profit and eternal payment of wages by one class to another. He could not even see, still less comprehend, the crucial transformation from individual cobblery to factory bootmaking that was going on under his eyes at Northampton itself. Such were the strange limitations in the intelligence of an exceptionally clever, industrious, observant, and generally broad-minded man—in spite of his meaner qualities so amiably set forth by the editor of *Truth*—when dealing with the social conditions of his own day and generation.

My last talk with Labby was carried on in a curiously off-hand way. He had come to London from Florence, and was staying at Queen Anne's

Mansions, ferrying to and fro his own rooms to the offices of *Truth* hard by in Carteret Street. I met him as I went out of my door in Queen Anne's Gate. That strange, mask-like face, skin-hardened and wrinkled, with its pair of shrewd, bright, quizzical-looking eyes showing out above, really gave me the impression its owner was pleased to see me. At any rate, as I wanted to learn his opinions upon things in general, I took it for granted he was. So we walked round and round that block of buildings between Dartmouth Street and the place where Rockefeller's new Business Oil Palace stands, for the better part of an hour. What did he say? I declare I do not know. It was all very smart, and his summing up of Dilke's characteristics and career was singularly acute, though, Dilke having passed away, I do not care to recall it; but the superficiality of the whole was so surprising that I could think of nothing else. It was something like the Dolly Dialogues done into political journalese. And that sort of light, off-hand writing, more or less French in its style, Labby was mainly responsible for making popular in England. It suited well the transition period into which he was born, and through which he lived, when men and women were deeply in earnest about things which did not in the least matter.

I regret now that the last time I was in Florence I did not send up my card to Labouchere's villa and try to have a word with him. But Labby was the sort of man whom one thought never could die. Why should he? The processes of his being were sufficiently indurated to last for ever. He had no sympathies to rack his heart, nor cares to drain his pocket. I felt sure he would go on living till it suited me to go to Florence again. Old as he was, I shall always feel that he "handed in his checks" before his time, and I am sorry he

did. That his daughter, whom I remember as a bright girl of ten, should be the Marchesa di Rudini sounds odd, but was no doubt satisfactory. Labby's Semitic democracy was always of the aristocratic type. Why not?

CHAPTER XIX

OF STRIKES

Can anything be imagined more foolish, more harmful, more, in the widest sense of the word, unsocial, than a strike? A number of men, greater or less in proportion to the extent and power of their organisation, have grievances for which they are unable to get redress. Though under existing conditions they have no means of keeping themselves and their families except by their daily work, they throw down their tools, refuse to go into the factory, declare they will not descend into the mines, decline to work the railways or the ships, and half starve themselves and the persons dependent upon them, in the hope of compelling those who own these various forms of private or company property to give way to their demands. It is a desperate method of fighting. There is only one more unsocial act possible in our present society, and that is the lock-out.

Both show actively what few educated people, even now, will admit passively: namely, that our existing system of making and distributing wealth is one long line of antagonisms; and that capital and labour are terms which mean and must mean a never-ending class struggle, or class war, between the employers or capitalists, whose sole object in producing wealth is to make profit out of the unpaid labour of their "hands," on the one side; and

the wage-earners, who, in their capacity as wealth-producers and wealth-distributors are compelled by the necessities of their existence to furnish such profit by accepting as wages a fraction of the wealth they aid in producing, on the other. This bitter struggle is always going on; but until it shows itself in the acute form of strikes or violence the well-to-do always contend that perfect harmony exists, or should exist, between profitmongers and wage-earners, and that capital is essential to the creation of social wealth. Capital, which connotes the use of the privately-owned means of making wealth in order to engender profit for the few, being thus confused with tools, machinery, methods of transport, and even land itself, which, socially handled, would suffice to provide ever-increasing wealth and well-being for all.

Which is not what I intended to say when I began.

I have never yet advocated a strike; but I have seen many strikes and I have helped to support not a few, when they had once begun. Yet it is scarcely too much to state that I have never known what I should call a successful strike—a strike, that is to say, which, the men having gained, temporarily at least, what they strove for, compensated them in the long run for the sacrifices entailed by their action. I have recognised, nevertheless, that, at times, the men have no other weapon at command and therefore were obliged to resort to this revolt of despair, unless they were content to submit to a still more intolerable existence, with never-ending anxiety for themselves and their families superadded as a perpetual moral torture.

One of the strikes which made a great impression upon me was the great strike of the coal-miners in North Staffordshire and East Worcestershire in the early eighties. It was indeed a terrible

affair, and lasted fully sixteen weeks. My friend Herbert Burrows was quartered at Netherton on official duty at that time, and, in the first instance, I went down to stay with him. Such a place as Netherton was! Dewsbury is an awful den for human beings to live in—a bad bit of London or Liverpool plumped down by itself in the heart of the great county of Yorkshire. But Netherton is worse. In addition to its lack of all reasonable sanitation or municipal care, the wretched miners' cottages and degraded-looking beer-houses, fully half the buildings in the town, that is to say, stand askew, with a debauched mien, as if recovering from a night's orgie and consequently unable to maintain themselves erect. This is due to the fact that, regardless of the comfort or the safety of their occupants, the ground beneath the houses has been mined out for coal and the structures have perforce accommodated themselves to the sinkage below. No sane owner would kennel his horses or his dogs in such dens.

The whole made a most gruesome impression upon me the first time I saw this array of tumble-down dwellings, stretching along the ill-kept roads, and the long years which have passed since have done little to efface it. Not a blade of grass or a flower was to be seen. The people who inhabited Netherton and its adjacent villages, however, were too much accustomed to their rickety shanties and the depressing landscape of piles of slag, alternating with mountains of mullock, all about them, to pay any attention to their lugubrious surroundings; and at the time I speak of they understood no more about their real relations to the owners of the minerals and the capitalists who employed them than negroes brought up on a breeding farm in Virginia before the American Civil War understood the ethics of modern chattel-slavery. They struck

against intolerable wage reductions and petty tyranny of the worst kind. Huge fortunes had been and were being piled up out of this ill-looking and evil-smelling centre of industry. Millionaires of the House of Lords and of the House of Capitalists had drawn their great incomes out of the men and women who toiled and suffered here in squalor and semi-starvation and constant danger to life and limb. There was little hope of improvement in their lot, but conditions had become so unbearable that a great strike was decided upon. As one of the pitmen who, with his family, was barely existing on strike pay, said to my wife: "If we work, we starve. If we play, we starve. We may just as well play for a bit as work on and starve on." So they came out.

"My son, if you have never been down a coal-mine, don't go. You can always say you have been and nobody can contradict you." This, or words to the same effect, was what Lord Chesterfield said to his son. I followed his advice to the extent that having been down coal-mines many years before I declined to visit any of the pits in the fighting districts. But I knew enough about the work from my own experience to feel quite sure that even in the best-managed pits to-day a coal-miner's life is not a happy one, is indeed as miserable a way of earning subsistence as can possibly be. And I have verified this opinion in South Wales and elsewhere since. If any set of toilers in Great Britain deserve to be well treated by the community they supply with a necessary of industrial and domestic life, it is the coal-miners, who pass their existence in hard, exhausting, and dangerous work below ground and in mean and depressing conditions above.

Now the men were out on strike and we read in the newspapers that the half-starved people

whom we saw around us had been habitually drinking champagne out of pewter-pots and feeding their bulldogs on beef-steaks. Certainly, for such work as they do, they are entitled, if anybody is, to as much champagne as they like to have, though they would not care to drink it, and to as much beef-steak as would keep a menagerie full of bulldogs. Needless to say, the whole statement was a lie from end to end. But it was useless to contradict it.

Even when Winwood, the leader and agent of the miners, proved conclusively from the books of the various mines that the average wage over years was less than £1 a week per head, and that this small wage was undergoing reduction, the public, misled by the capitalist press, which refused to publish the figures, still believed all this malignant rubbish, purposely invented by the tools of the coal-owners in order to prejudice the case of the men. Living among them, seeing their wretched dwellings, going into their rough "pubs," and taking account of all the dogs to be seen within the whole district, it was impossible even for a stranger not to feel indignant. That the pitmen themselves were not goaded into anarchist action by such disgraceful tactics on the part of "the organs of public opinion" was to me a constant cause of amazement. Suffering as they were, with their wives and children starving around them, it was indeed wonderful that they patiently put up with what they did.

The conditions of their daily life being what they were, and completely shut out from any community with the well-to-do, they expected to find no fellow-feeling outside of their own class. One poor miner was killed in a pit before the strike began. Burrows went to see his family, expressed his commiseration for the widow, followed the body to the grave, and put a handful of flowers

on the coffin. The whole neighbourhood was astounded that a man of Burrows' position should show any sympathy in the matter; such a thing was quite unheard-of in the district. In fact, the pitmen and their families were regarded by the upper classes around much as their slaves of the mines or farms were looked upon by the Roman land and slave-owners, or as a great noble of the *ancien régime* in France viewed his ancestral serfs.

Thus, when I addressed mass meetings of the men on strike I could not but think, as I surveyed the worn faces and skeleton forms of the men, with their sad-looking wives and children gathered on the fringe of the crowds, that an uprising against such a state of things was to the full as justifiable here as it had been in France a century before. But such reflections were quite premature at the time. However, Burrows, Burns, Helen Taylor, and myself delivered ourselves of our speeches at meeting after meeting; we did our best to keep the men in good spirits; we stirred them up as far as we could to the appreciation of Socialism, contributed our mite to the strike funds, and left, wishing, rather than hoping, after two or three visits, that success might be achieved. During the strike Lady Dudley, the mother of the principal owner of the coalfield, came down to open a free library or something of that sort in a neighbouring town and was received with the greatest cordiality by the people!

Not far from Netherton is Cradley Heath. Here the conditions for the workers were, inconceivable as it may seem, even worse than at Netherton. Low wages—8s. to 9s. a week—bad houses, insanitary workshops, heavy labour, girls competing with men: this chain-making industry has often been described and its effects upon the people denounced, but though there is improvement the

change has been comparatively small. The men and women were too poor and too ill-organised even to strike for relief and betterment. I left this particular district quite convinced that nothing short of a social revolution could bring any remedy. I look back at the record of our visit a quarter of a century ago, I read how things are going there to-day, and I remain of the same opinion, though some trifling reforms have been made.

The Helen Taylor of whom I speak above was the step-daughter of John Stuart Mill. She fought a very good fight in her day on the London School Board for secular and gratuitous education in all the schools, and stood up likewise for "women's rights" at a time when to do so in earnest was very unpopular. Now both she herself and her services to the people are almost forgotten. Nor can it be said that J. S. Mill's works, either as an economist or as a philosopher, wear very well. Students, however, in the fifties and sixties of the last century were no doubt much influenced by his eclectic methods. At the close of his life Mr. Mill accepted in the main the doctrines of Socialism, though this fact has been carefully disguised by his Radical admirers, and Helen Taylor was inclined towards Socialism herself and certainly did some very good work in connection with the Social-Democratic Federation in the early days of the movement.

Unfortunately, like some other women of her class, she could not put up with the long, wearyful, disappointing period of waiting, and this, combined with her inability to stay in London during the winter owing to bronchitis, gradually drifted her away from us. She was an exceedingly good, logical speaker with a high, clear, penetrating voice that seemed to cleave the air and reach to the remotest corner of a large hall like the high notes of a violin. She always began very quietly, her tall

frame as upright as possible, and apparently without any emotion whatever. Once in St. James's Hall, at a very crowded gathering, a Webster[1] man at the back shouted, "Speak up." Miss Taylor did not raise her voice in the least, but by degrees that telling intonation of hers seemed to fill the air with its vibrations and everybody could hear quite well.

It is strange to recall nowadays what an amount of passion was roused by her School Board candidatures at Southwark and how hard Soutter and her other Radical supporters had to fight, physically to fight, in order to obtain for her anything approaching to fair play. Now that the all-important question of Education has been thrown back for at least a generation by the success of Mr. and Mrs. Sidney Webb, their fellow-Fabians and other middle-class municipalists in mixing it up with sewerage, paving, lighting, water-supply, and the like, it is sad to reflect upon the real interest awakened among at any rate a large section of the working-classes by direct agitation and representation on the School Boards for Education in London, and throughout the country. Really capable, independent women in this matter like Miss Taylor, Mrs. Annie Besant, and Mrs. Bridges Adams, have far less chance of being elected to-day than they had twenty years ago; which, no doubt, is what the fanatics of bureaucracy desired. At any rate, Helen

[1] The famous American orator Daniel Webster was delivering an address on one occasion in Faneuil Hall, Boston, when a man at the back of the hall shouted, "Speak up!" Webster paid no attention to the interruption. A second time came the summons, "Speak up!" Webster went on without raising his voice. A third cry in the same sense followed, "Speak up!" Webster then turning to the chairman, said: "Sir, at the Last Great Day, when all the infinite generations of mankind are gathered together round the footstool of the Throne, awaiting the final Judgment; when the heavens are rolled up as in a scroll, and the countenance of the Almighty is turned towards the good and the evil, the just and the unjust; when the angels with their silver trumpets are sending forth their clarion blast of blessing or of doom: in that great and terrible moment of universal anticipation and mortal dread, as the first words issue from the mouth of the Omnipotent Recorder, some damned fool from Boston will cry out—'Speak up!' 'Speak up!'"

Taylor did what she could to help on the cause of progress, and was not afraid at Netherton and elsewhere to speak out boldly on behalf of the disinherited class.

A number of the labour leaders of that day also came down to speak at this great strike. They were very decent fellows indeed, and, according to their lights, quite true to their class. But they regarded Socialism as a mere chimera, and it was waste of time to try to make them understand. I got on very well with them, and told them stories of my experiences in various parts of the world: told them, for one thing, how, before I became a Socialist, I, on the occasion of one great strike in London, in order to learn precisely the rights and wrongs of the case, disguised myself as a blackleg, and came before the Strike Committee to be persuaded in that capacity. I had, of course, got up all the jargon of the trade beforehand, and my make-up was carried out by one of the greatest artists in that line in the metropolis. So I completely took in the men whom I met.

I gave the Labour leaders round Burrows' fireside at Netherton an amusing but perfectly true account of what I did, where I went, how I felt, what I said, what was said to me, and told them how the adventure ended. They listened, they laughed, they asked questions, which I answered quite frankly, and they showed no distrust of my statements, which, as I say, were merely records of the actual facts. Then, somehow, one of them, who had been for a time in the coasting trade, began to talk about the dangers of the sea, the particularly hazardous nature of the seafaring life round our shores, and gave us an account of narrow escapes he had had, especially on sailing vessels.

Thereupon I spoke of catamarans and canoes with outriggers, how they tacked by carrying the

sail when lowered from one end of the craft to the other, how, when it blew a little hard, one man got out on the outrigger to balance the weight of the wind on the sail, and thus to keep the canoe from capsizing. Then when it blew harder another man sat on the outrigger beside the first. Later, when the breeze rose to the proportions of a gale, man after man crept out to join his companions, only the steersman being left in the body of the vessel. Again they asked questions, which I answered as frankly as before.

Encouraged by their attentive listening, I told them other tales, one of them the most terrible of its kind I know. A planter in the South Seas, a very fine fellow, a man of good family at home and of decent life as life went in those parts, formed the usual sort of connection with a particularly rough female specimen of the labour people from the Line Islands. Physically a splendid creature, this woman was violently passionate, addicted to liquor, and furiously jealous.

Time passed on. Elphinstone, the planter in question, fell in love with and became engaged to a very handsome and well-educated girl from the Colonies, and went back to New Zealand to be married to her, taking this person, madman that he was, with his betrothed and her sister, as their maid. The marriage took place, and Elphinstone and his wife returned to the plantation, the Line Island woman being still with them. Her conduct on their return became unbearable, and Elphinstone was warned that the woman was becoming actually dangerous, and that his wife's life was not safe. The coloured girl was therefore removed to another island at some distance. There she remained, and it was naturally thought, as there were no canoes available where she was, that all danger was at an end. Elphinstone, a little later, was

obliged to go to the principal town on his schooner for business, leaving his wife, as he thought, in perfect safety behind him. He returned within three days, and on landing from his boat, was horrified to learn that this discarded woman had actually swum across from the other island, regardless of sharks, had attacked his wife with a great knife, had cut her to bits, and had then swum back again to the island to which she had been banished. My Labour friends once more listened with all their ears, and we remained up talking and story-telling till a very late hour.

In the morning Burrows, who had not been present for some reason, having night duty to attend to, or at any rate being away, asked my companions of the night before what they thought of Mr. Hyndman. "Oh!" replied one of them, "we all thought him a very nice gentleman; but, my word, Mr. Burrows, ain't he just an awful liar!"

The North Staffordshire and East Worcestershire coal strike failed, after its sixteen weeks of sad starvation and suffering for the men and their families, and I was more set against strikes than ever, except on a vast scale, and as a deliberate preparation for a complete revolution.

But did you ever speak from an orange-box, which you had borrowed yourself from the old fruit-woman at the corner, to hundreds of dockers at the Dock Gates at five o'clock in the morning, day after day for weeks? I presume not. Yet that is the work that was done by Jack Williams, and Burrows, and Hobart, and Hunter Watts, and Tom Mann, and Ben Tillett, and Will Thorne, and Champion, and myself for weeks and months at a time before the great Dockers' Strike in 1889. We were preaching Socialism and the need for solid combination among all classes of workers as the

sole remedy for the hideous state of things which existed; whereby, owing to the excess of casual labour, men were competing and even fighting with one another for a starvation wage on the chance of receiving pitiful daily pay—being treated worse than dogs by the dock companies and their overseers. We had all of us then in our minds the desirability and possibility of so organising the East End workers as a whole that we might be able to induce them to bring direct pressure to bear upon the West End rulers.

It cost us much time and much trouble. It is not my way to enlarge upon the trying work we did in those old days. But I do think those long-continued early-morning exhortations at the Dock Gates were, on the whole, the most depressing experiences I ever had. Others did a great deal more at the time than I did; but it was all on the same lines. This is what occurred to me:—

1. Acquisition of orange-box for platform, done, in the first instance, in a sheepish, shamefaced way.

2. Placing of the orange-box at a convenient corner—still with much diffidence; men lounging around, now the Dock Gates were shut, with their hands in their pockets, and looking on, as I thought, contemptuously, at my proceedings.

3. Mounting of the orange-box by the orator, and the commencement of his speech to no one in particular, with the familiar "Friends and Fellow-Citizens." How cold and empty I did feel, to be sure, and no one near.

4. Gradually drifting me-wards of a few of the sad-looking stragglers on slump. Steady increase of numbers as address went on.

5. Some interest awakened, and even a little applause from hands reluctantly drawn from pockets gave the speaker courage; he was able to reflect upon the class of men he was addressing. They

looked what they were, workers capable of much better things than casual labour, but worn, weary, and anxious, with that unfinished appearance about the neck which the absence of a collar always gives to an observer from the west.

6. Attempts at jocularity not badly received, earnest adjurations to the men to combine, pointing out that they could, as a whole, gain for one another together what none of them could gain separately. A little enthusiasm here and there in a fairly big crowd.

7. Finish up. Sometimes questions. Return not altogether hopeless.

Such is a fair account of my experience at the Dock Gates. Others, such as Jack Williams, John Burns, Hunter Watts, and Herbert Burrows, were more successful. But for myself I can safely say that nothing but the religion, not to say the fanaticism, of Socialism could have kept me up at those early, chilly, depressing Dock Gate meetings.

To be successful with such elements we knew must take time and much trouble. The tale told of the Metropolitan police magistrate, who said, "I never go to bed at night but I ask myself whether the East will come West before morning, and I never wake up in the morning without asking myself whether the East has come West in the night," had no echo with us. We knew the circumstances and the minds of the people too well to have any faith in such a spontaneous eruption. Apathy, ignorance, and utter lack of confidence in one another were not to be removed at a stroke. That was very certain. Moreover, we had not the slightest belief in the success of a strike at that juncture. Where was the money to come from to keep the men and their families when they were out? That was the question.

However, advantage was taken of our propa-

ganda to start the still famous Dockers' Strike of 1889. Though confident that no permanent good could come of the movement, we pursued the course we have invariably adopted, and backed the strikers to the full extent possible when the strike had once begun. Of those who were the leading figures on the side of the men, Eleanor Marx, Will Thorne, Tom Mann, Dr. Aveling, Ben Tillett, and John Burns, three are still left who are as active and determined as ever—Will Thorne, Ben Tillett, and Tom Mann.

What followed the strike of the Dockers was surprising. Quite a large proportion of the public was in their favour, and, at first, funds poured in to sufficient amount to enable the strike to go on. It produced a great effect—greater in the West than in the East. Cardinal Manning and other high-placed personages openly took the side of the men. The vigour displayed by Tom Mann, Ben Tillett, and others was nothing short of amazing. The loyalty of the men themselves to their comrades and the general cause was magnificent. The Dockers' tanner—6d. an hour—for their hard and dangerous work became a cry which awakened sympathy in the most unexpected quarters; the processions of the men were cordially greeted in every district, and the unwearied efforts of the leaders and spokesmen called forth universal admiration. In spite of all this, contributions began to fall off, the organised Trade Unions, not recognising that the uplifting of the unskilled labourers must benefit them, rendered little or no assistance, and the probability of a complete fiasco was creeping into the mind of the most sanguine.

Suddenly the big contribution of £35,000 came from Australia in one lump, and put a new face upon the whole matter. The men and their leaders were immensely encouraged; the employers, who

really had a very bad case, were proportionally depressed. It at once became possible to carry on the strike for a little time longer. But all knew the real weakness of the men, and compromise became inevitable. The sixpence an hour was conceded, and a nominal victory was gained.

But all who know the actual facts in relation to riverside labour are well aware that the improvement in the status of the dockers was rather nominal than real. A few of those permanently engaged benefited considerably, more got the rise they had striven for, when employed. Viewed generally, however, it is the fact that the dockers as a body were, in some repects, even worse after the strike than they were before.

There has been a tendency to forget of late years that the Great Dockers' Strike of 1889 spread rapidly to other trades, and throughout the provinces. Yet this was the case. There was a period of marked unrest in every direction, and there were even some who thought that a semi-prediction I had made, for the purpose of encouragement, some years before, to the effect that the year 1889 might show itself worthy of being the centenary of the 1789 would be realised in this island. But those of us who had studied the position close at hand were in nowise of that opinion. We knew that the old Trade Unionists were still steeped in apathy and saturated with purely bourgeois conceptions; that, likewise, even if they had been willing to give a lead, shortness of funds and downright ignorance would prevent any enduring success. We Social-Democrats, therefore, were not at all surprised when the great stir of 1889-93 brought forth but a small result in the end.

The principal advances, regarded from the point of view of the general progress of the working-class, were: First, a rude conception,

which it has taken twenty-two years to develop into action, that the unskilled casual dockers, with their allied trades, might, if sufficiently organised, control the entire water-borne trade of London. Second, the formation of Unions of unskilled labourers, such as the Gas-workers and General Labourers, the Dockers, the Match-makers, etc., all of them founded and headed by Socialists. Third, the growth of a demand for independent working-class representation in the House of Commons. But events move very slowly indeed in Great Britain, and a new generation grows up before the lessons of the movement are taken to heart.

Strange as it may seem, there have been men who could easily have obtained and kept far better paid and less exhausting work, to say nothing of immunity from danger, who have deliberately preferred the personal freedom of the casual dock labourer to any sort of engagement, however remunerative, which would in any way fetter them from one day to another. Such a man was C. W. Pearson, quite an exceptional character, whose early death by misadventure I, in common with all those who knew him, have never ceased deeply to regret.

Pearson was by nature an individualist of the most intense description. When he first came among us he could not bear being controlled, even on terms of perfect equality with his fellows, and found contradiction, and even adverse criticism, or argument, very hard to brook. His dark, keen, eager face, well-knit frame, and sharp, resonant voice soon made him a well-known figure at all our gatherings. He speedily found out and recognised his own shortcomings, and set to work to remedy them in earnest. He was one of the few workers whom I have ever known to correct

assiduously not only his pronunciation, but his intonation, entirely of his own accord. And he succeeded. It was rather surprising to those who did not know him to hear a man in rough docker's garb speak as correctly, as naturally, and with as refined an accent and intonation as a thoroughly educated member of society. His dress, also, when he left the docks, bore out this impression, and his whole demeanour and conversation at last gave you the idea of a highly-cultivated University man without the least assumption or air of superiority.

His mode of life was most extraordinary. He would work for a few days at the docks until he had earned what he considered was enough to keep himself for the rest of the week. Then he would dress in his West-End apparel, and make his way to the British Museum, where he would study from the time the doors opened in the morning until they closed in the evening. He became, by dint of this continuous and intelligent work, an authority on subjects which few thoroughly master. In practical affairs what specially interested him was that encyclopædic subject—the land. The land: how to deal with it, how to interest the people in tilling it, how to accommodate its cultivation to the Socialist period we were entering upon. To this he largely devoted himself, and, enormous as were the difficulties, practical and theoretical, which he had to encounter, it is my belief that, had he lived, he would have helped greatly to the solution of this very complex problem. Though, as already hinted, he was, when roused, a most vigorous and bitter controversialist, there was no man in the Socialist movement more respected and admired.

Many a time I begged of him not to continue his work at the docks, pointing out to him that, much as we might desire social equality, and

certain as we might be that we should achieve it in days to come, nevertheless his life was much more useful and valuable to the movement than the lives of other men of his class who had not trained themselves as he had. Consequently, I urged, and so did we all, that he owed it to the cause to accept what was frequently pressed upon him—a much less hazardous mode of earning his livelihood with far better pay. It was of no use. His handsome face would light up, his eyes would brighten at the appreciation shown of what he was doing and intended to do, but nothing would induce him to give up the careless freedom of a docker's life. And so one day this fine young fellow, in the very prime of his active physical and mental career, when opportunities of real distinction in the service of his class, which he never would have abandoned, still less betrayed, were crowding upon him, went as usual to his docker work.

How it happened nobody ever precisely knew, but his foot slipped as he crossed a plank, and his head was smashed against the side of the basin below. "I never thought the day would come," said the old Duke of Wellington, "when the death of such a promising young officer would make so little impression as the news of this death does upon me." It is natural that, as we get older, thousands of bright and hopeful lads having passed away around us before their time, we should feel less and less the departure of any individual. But Pearson's mournful and quite unnecessary cutting off greatly saddened me, I confess. The crowds that followed his body to the grave were no consolation for his premature death, and as I said a few words to the assembled thousands gathered in the cemetery, I felt that we had lost a leader of his class whom we might never be able to replace.

And what is leadership? What is the rarest faculty in man? Precisely that which our modern institutions do their utmost to repress. In peace and in war, in business and in pleasure, in art and in science, in politics and in organisation, the rarest faculty is initiative. At a time when I was being carefully shepherded by the police of London my wife had a conversation with one of the heads of the detective force whom we then knew pretty well. "What your people seem to lack," she said, "is initiative; you should encourage initiative." "Just show us the man with initiative, Mrs. Hyndman, and we'll encourage him fast enough. The difficulty is to find him. We want him badly enough." And so it is. Genuine initiative and leadership is rare. In youth, in maturity, in age, it is the one ready to go ahead and jump the dyke, or face the angry farmer, who opens up new vistas of progress and puts the motive power into the machine.

When, therefore, I hear foolish people say, "We don't want any leaders," I recognise that at once as the cry of mediocrities who are afraid of any vigorous initiative, or of incompetents who think all leadership must mean dictatorship which, of course, is a very different thing. The loss of the leaders of French Socialism in the Paris Commune threw back the French movement twenty years. The death of Liebknecht greatly weakened Internationalism in the German party. The collapse of Parnell and the death of Davitt converted the Irish Parliamentary Party into a commonplace middle-class caucus, representative only of Roman Catholics and gombeen-men. A great leader in China at this moment would change the face of the world. But half-educated democracy in Western Europe wavers between servility to authority and jealousy of capacity. And so I suppose it will go

on until thorough education, an easy outlet for all faculty, and the removal of any incentive to cupidity or ambition accord a natural and unenvied lead in the various departments of human activity to those who are capable of showing the way.

Bethesda, in North Wales, has been the scene of two great strikes of Welsh slate quarry-men against Lord Penrhyn and Mr. Assheton Smith, the monopolists of this industry. The first of these I went down to, and did my best to help the men. It was again a terrible situation. Lord Penrhyn took upon himself all the airs of a feudal autocrat of the Middle Ages, and Mr. Assheton Smith was not the man to be behind the Peer in dictatorial arrogance to "his" men. Starvation and misery pervaded the district. I declared in *Justice* that the behaviour of the proprietors and their agents was "infamous." Straightway, on my return to London, I was served with a writ for £20,000 damages by that illustrious firm, Lewis and Lewis of Ely Place, whose head was then the famous George Lewis. I was informed that I could have no prospect of successfully defending the suit. But there were points in my favour which even Lewis had disregarded. The character of his clients was none of the best.

My friend and solicitor, Mr. Leonard Hill, a member of the Social-Democratic Federation, went down himself to the district as my solicitor and his own detective, and returned with such a long and formidable catalogue of unseemly acts and indecent behaviour that my answers to the interrogatories submitted to me by the plaintiff's attorneys, which did not tell one-half the story, showed a state of things existing in the district, with such overwhelming evidence at hand to prove it, that the

action was withdrawn and all my costs were paid. I have always congratulated myself upon this result of the only libel suit with which I have ever been threatened. But I must not boast too soon.

Unluckily, though the men gained some advantages in this first strike, they were unable to obtain any real security for a decent living wage and fair treatment, and afterwards a larger and even more determined strike broke out which, after involving terrible suffering, was likewise unsuccessful. Strikes, unless organised on a revolutionary scale, are, indeed, a poor weapon of class warfare and, even when so organised, victory is none too certain.

Wales has a special advantage in strike organisation. It is scarcely too much to say that the Welsh language, as against us English, gives the Welsh workers almost all the gains with none of the drawbacks of the secret society. It is a pity they do not make more use of this. When staying, however, at Pen-y-Rhws with that remarkable man the late Lord Stanley of Alderley, I had not been there more than three days before the servants and workers on the property got to know I had stood by the Bethesda men in their difficulty. Although I don't believe there was the slightest necessity for any secrecy in the matter where Lord Stanley was concerned, as with all his Mohammedanism and extraordinary learning he was a very open-minded and tolerant man indeed, they took an opportunity when I least expected anything of the sort, to convey to me personally, the other guests being out of the way, that they all regarded me as a friend for what I had done on behalf of the Welshmen — not quarry-men — at Bethesda, but gave me to understand they did not wish this recognition of my services to be mentioned.

And here I must tell a story at my own expense. One day at dinner at Pen-y-Rhws the

discussion turned on a future life, its prospects, its advantages, its possibilities, and so forth. The majority, I am not sure it was not the whole, of those present believed in immortality and in the recognition after death of the persons whom we had loved on earth—post-mortem encounters with the hated and disagreeable were not considered. I have not, as a rule, the spirit of caution developed in me to the Scotch extent. I could not say as did my old friend Alexander Finlay, the father of two of my college friends at Cambridge, as we sat one fine summer evening on the terrace at Castle Toward, overlooking the glorious view of Rothesay and the Kyles of Bute, and I stated my opinions about the Christian religion—"I have held those views, my dear Hyndman, for more than forty years, but I have not thought it prudent to express them." I do not possess, I repeat, this valuable quality of concealing my thoughts; but on this occasion I carefully held my tongue. At last I was asked point-blank whether I believed in a future life or not. I replied that I did not, and that when the very basis of memory was obliterated, self as a recognisable individuality necessarily ceased to be. Our bodies were simply reabsorbed into the immensity of matter, and no future life with conscious mentality was possible. This statement seemed to shock the rest of the guests a good deal, and there were some exclamations and objections. Lord Stanley was very deaf, and did not hear what was said. He asked what I had stated. He was told that I had expressed my conviction that there was no future life. "Then we shall at least be free from his undesirable agitations," was his reply.

I do not know that I ever met a man with a wider or deeper range of knowledge than Lord Stanley. Whatever subject he took up he genuinely

studied and made himself master of, while his information on Eastern affairs, in particular, was as extensive as it was thorough. It is strange that with all this knowledge and considerable general ability he made so little impression in the House of Lords. Probably this was another case of the overrating of the mere speaking faculty or rather of the underrating of the man who does not possess it. Lord Stanley could speak; but like some others of marked ability, Belfort Bax for example, he delivered himself in such wise as to belittle his own intelligence. It was a great pity. He prided himself very much more upon his descent in the female line from the famous old Welsh family of Owen, from whom he inherited his Welsh property, than upon his English blood and position, and he was adored by his tenants. He knew them all and their children too by their names, and so managed that even in these days farmers would go any distance to get a farm under Lord Stanley. I have sometimes wondered whether his Radical brother who succeeded him, and who belongs to the buy-cheap-and-sell-dear school, has followed in his footsteps. I hope so; for, as long as the present system holds, a good landlord, who also looks after his labourers, is a monstrous deal better than a bad one. It was a pleasure to see the relations between Lord Stanley and his people.

That he should have been a convinced and even a devout Mohammedan is, no doubt, evidence of eccentricity at the beginning of the twentieth century. But he never, so far as I know, in any way paraded his religious belief or allowed it to interfere with his ordinary duties. It is strange, nevertheless, to reflect that an English Peer of undoubted capacity should have felt that it would conduce to his comfort when dying to know that he would be buried in the Park at Alderley, with

full Mohammedan rites, which a great religious functionary of the Moslem faith came expressly from Constantinople to celebrate. He evidently did believe in a future life—and the Houris of Paradise?

All this has taken me a long way from my subject, which I believe is strikes and my experience of them. As to sabotage, or rattening, or destroying machinery or means of transport. This is a poor sort of fighting, a reversion to the "Luddite" foolishness of a bygone day. Yet it is a form of class war in action, however much we may consider it objectionable and futile. I do not deny that I myself have wished at times that some spirit of this sort would be spontaneously displayed by the men. But to be effective it must *be* spontaneous and not stirred up from outside. I remember when the great strike on the Midland Railway was in full blast in 1893, I said in the Democratic Club that I wished the men, instead of starving themselves, their wives and children for months on end, would bring the whole thing to a head by blowing up a lot of the bridges, and thus render the three main lines of railway to the North unavailable. It would, I said, convince me they were in earnest and meant to fight the thing to a finish; though on principle I was not at all in favour of destruction, but of appropriation.

There was a roar of protest from Radicals present. I was denounced as an anarchist of the most incendiary brand. More, I was told that it was a most cowardly thing to advocate such monstrous proceedings at a safe distance, and that, if I really meant what I said, the least I could do was to go down and blow up some bridges myself. For once in my life I was quite meek and mild in my rejoinder, and I pointed out in a true pacifist

spirit that I had not advocated bridge-destruction, but had said, what I stuck to, that I should be glad to hear that the men, quite unaided, had brought themselves to the point which induced them to do this; that also for me to go down there and attempt this wild policy of revenge and partial overthrow would have no significance at all, except that of qualifying me beyond a peradventure for a permanent post as an inmate of a criminal lunatic asylum. The blowing up of bridges by, or at the instance of, a sympathiser from London could scarcely be regarded as conclusive evidence of the exasperation and vigour —however misdirected — of the strikers on the spot.

But I verily believe that the ordinary educated bourgeois, especially the smug Radical bourgeois, regards the destruction of private property as a much more heinous offence than even the sacrifice of human life. Middle-class ethics are based upon the sanctity of individual appropriation, and therefore upon the protection of such property once acquired, no matter how, from injury at all costs. Consequently, wilful damage to property constitutes an assault upon the very Ark of the profit-monger's Covenant, a criminal attack upon the Holy of holies of the capitalist creed.

It is perhaps strange at first sight that the Welsh, with all their tenacity and class loyalty, as a whole, in the district, should be even more unfortunate in their strikes than others. What happened in the Slate Quarries of the North under Anglican Tory landlordism occurred also in the South under Nonconformist Radical capitalism. There is no need to recall the origin and causes of the strike of the colliers in 1911 against the magnates and monopolists of the Cambrian Coal Combine. Suffice it to say that here the colliers

were ill-paid and living under bad conditions. I visited the district many times, and there was nothing to my mind more depressing than to contrast the splendid scenery of the Welsh moors and mountains with the dog hutches and pigsties which served in many cases to house the men and their families, approached as they were by precipitous, horribly ill-kept roads that were positively dangerous to life and limb. Amusements, so far as I could see, there were none outside the public-house and the conventicle—"rum and true religion."

What chance had these poor people unaided, on their strike pay, against the great Coal Trust, owned and managed by Radical-Nonconformist millionaires, with all the power of the Liberal Party behind them, and that Party in office? What chance had the coal-slaves against a concern which had paid £13,000,000 in dividends in eleven years? None at all, unless the whole coal industry all over the country made common cause with them, and this the older school of Trade Unionists who dominated the coal-workers at that time, as they still do the cotton-workers, steadily refused to do.

But then, here again, the very same men who keep out on strike on starvation wages, who fight against tyranny, who are batoned by police and coerced and shot down by soldiery, who denounce their employers as sweaters and slave-drivers—these identical men, like their fellows in the North and the Midlands, return to Parliament to represent their political, social, and economic interests, Mr. D. A. Thomas, the head of the Cambrian Coal Combine, whose injustice has forced them to strike! Can anything possibly be more imbecile? But so it is, and it is extremely doubtful if even Mr. Keir Hardie would be elected again at

Merthyr Tydvil, if the Liberal voters of similar character turned against him.

And then there are the Nonconformist Ministers, most of them in the pay of the various companies. They have great influence, and in the main it is necessarily exercised in favour of their paymasters. When Tom Mann went to address the miners in the full heat of the strike at one of the principal villages, he had a remarkable experience of the chloroforming effect of the religionist element. On his arrival at the station he was met by one of the local leaders of the men. "We shall have a good meeting, I suppose," said Mann. "Well, I'm a bit afraid: there are five prayer meetings in the village to-night." Mann's hall was barely half full; yet he is one of the ablest, most stirring, and most attractive speakers in the movement. In the end the Federation of Coal Miners refused to go on with the strike pay, and the strike collapsed. So it goes.

Of course, the great strikes of the summer of 1911 are supposed to have been successful, and it is beyond all question that the admirably organised Dockers' and Carmen's, etc., strike did obtain substantial advances for the various combined transport trades, as represented in the Transport Workers' Federation. But this strike had been worked up for twelve months beforehand, the men were well disciplined and loyal to one another, and their grievances were generally admitted. Even so, the strike broke out prematurely, did not last long, succeeded in arresting the victualling of London, and, though the men were even more vehement than their leaders, was handled in masterly fashion in the first place by Tillett, and at the back of him by W. Thorne, H. Gosling, Orbell, J. Jones, and others. When also the dockers were once out in London, and

then in Liverpool, the strike spread just as in 1889. The unrest was more extensive than it had been twenty-two years before, the men stood better together (the Federation idea having gained ground), the apparent gain was much greater, and in London itself probably permanent. But, taken as a whole, the similarity of the entire thing is only too marked; lack of preparation, want of food, readiness to listen to professional upper-class strike negotiators and to mistake the shadow for the substance, as the railway men undoubtedly did in 1907 and again in 1911.

It is questionable, even, whether the growth of solidarity, the great scare of the well-to-do classes, who were taken by surprise and found their food supplies and locomotion threatened, and the confidence of being able to impose an industrial interdict on the whole community at a later date, will make up for the discouragement among a large section of the workers at the surrender; for the successful employment of the soldiers in several districts; for the reaction which followed; or for the awakening of the rich and their hangers-on to what a genuine class-war strike really means.

Unless industrial combination and capable political action go hand-in-hand together, the prospect of victory for the wage-earners in this country is still very remote. But for the exceptionally hot weather which rendered worklessness and loss of wages more bearable, the neglect on their side to make ready for such a serious upheaval would have been still more bitterly felt. Moreover, the possessing classes in England up to now have not begun to bribe, or to cajole, or to organise spies and agents of provocation systematically, or, in short, to use in earnest the many weapons of defence which lie ready to their hand. That they will do so when they clearly realise that the

"rights of property" are threatened, I myself have no doubt whatsoever. A very superficial acquaintance with the history of the Chartist movement, when the outlook for the wage-earners was not nearly so favourable, gives some idea of what the governing classes are capable when alarmed.

Strikes, also, however successful they may be, do not necessarily lead to a capable organisation and administration of industry and transport, especially with an uneducated and undisciplined population such as ours. That must ever be borne in mind.

Thus far had I written about strikes when, after ample warning extending over many months, and notices extending over thirty days, the whole of the colliers of the country came out on strike for a minimum wage; the most remarkable part of their demand, thus enforced by a strike of the entire industry, being that the so-called minimum was a variable amount from 4s. 11d. in one district, through various grades, up to 7s. 6d. in others. Logic in this there was none. The miners themselves actually argued that they did not wish to occasion the shutting down of the poorer pits; though, undoubtedly, their whole case would have been stronger had they declared out and out that no adult should work below ground for less than 7s. 6d. or 8s. per day. There are hundreds of millions of tons of coal in this island still awaiting development, and plenty of capital to open up collieries to get out the coal; but so long as low wages rule, inferior pits will be kept working rather than sacrifice the amounts of capital embarked in them. That the pitmen themselves should act in support of such a bourgeois conception is amazing, after all the economic teaching which has gone on for at least a generation.

This last strike was really the indirect out-

come of the long dragging strike in South Wales of 1911, unsupported by the Miners' Federation. That strike was directed against the systematic defrauding of the miners of their wages when working in abnormal places—virtually doing what is called "dead work": work essential to the upkeep of the mine, that is to say, but not directly profitable — by the Mining Trusts, as exposed not only by the miners, but by more than one of the ablest mining managers in the district. When the miners, as a whole, came out to demand what is, after all, but bare justice, namely a decent wage paid every week, not merely "on the average," to every man who works underground, they undoubtedly menaced the entire well-being of the whole nation. But what were they to do? Their case was most reasonable: they had given a full seven months' warning: the Government and the country were well aware of what lay ahead of them. The best proof that the men had right on their side was that even the coal-owners themselves were prepared to accede to their demands by 65 to 35, a majority of nearly two to one. The Government, not daring to coerce the 35 per cent of recalcitrant Trust-magnates and monopolists, set to work to cajole or bully the miners at a series of "Conferences," while the industry of the nation was "held up" for an entire month. The passing of an Act recognising the principle of a minimum wage, without any definite figures being cited, was indeed a poor result for all the sacrifices undergone by the miners, and imposed by them upon the community. This even the most strenuous advocates of the miners must recognise.[1]

[1] Obviously a minimum wage, even securing a fixed sum per week or day for all employed, cannot cover the ground. The variation of the purchasing-power of the amount of wages paid on a gold basis must be taken into consideration. A wage of seven shillings a day in 1912

But there were two features in this great strike which are worthy of notice. First, the miners struck not for increase of pay for the higher and better-organised grades of labour, but for a "living wage" for all engaged in the industry, and a proper scale of payment for every miner at work in "abnormal places," where no remunerative quantity of coal could be won. Secondly, it was impossible for the capitalist class to play off as usual one section of the coal-miners against another. All were united. It was a strike not only of trade but of class, and not merely of skilled but of unskilled workers, on the same ground and for a common object. Such complete solidarity had not been witnessed in this country before, not even in the great railway strike of 1893.

Hence arose the cry on the other side of "Syndicalism" and Syndicalists. It is certain that there is no effective Syndicalism in the French sense in this country. Syndicalism is a bastard form of anti-political Anarchism. Each Trade Union is to be a law unto itself; to eschew all idea of political action; to resort to rattening, sabotage, and wrecking wherever it seems likely to be effective; to adopt such methods as may break down profit in each trade in turn, and organise wholly and solely for the benefit of the workers in that trade. There is, I repeat, practically no effective Syndicalism or Industrial Unionism of this kind in Great Britain, nor do I believe it will ever have much influence here. The great colliers' strike was in no sense a Syndicalist strike, although, as it dealt with one industry alone, this was in some quarters taken for granted. I know many of the men who have most

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purchases no more than a payment of six shillings a day did in 1902, owing to the depreciation of gold. A minimum wage must be based on a standard of life.

influence among the miners, and who were talked of as Syndicalists. Every one of them is in favour of organised and independent political action, is opposed to strikes, except as a last resort against unendurable tyranny on the part of the employers, and has a contempt for "rattening" or "sabotage" as a serious weapon in the class war.

The causes of the strike, apart from direct tyranny and cheating, which was specially noticeable in Wales in the matter of "abnormal places," were unquestionably the general unrest of the wage-earners, including, of course, coal-miners, as a class; the universal disappointment with the doings of the Labour Party in Parliament; the world-wide fall in the purchasing-power of wages, reckoned on a gold basis, owing to the cheapening of the cost of producing gold, without a corresponding rise in the money-wage paid; and the persistent Socialist agitation carried on among the coal-miners, in spite of all discouragement, for fully thirty years. In fact, the general unrest in every country, as well as in Great Britain, is mainly due to the increasing recognition by the workers of every nation in Europe that modern wage-earning is merely the ancient chattel-slavery in disguise. The wage-earner is not personally at the mercy of his master or his company in the same way as the chattel-slave, or even as the serf was at the command of his owner or his lord; but, economically, he has as little command, as a class or as an individual, over himself and his power of labour as his predecessors in the task of providing unpaid-for wealth for the owners of land and capital had over their toil or the product of their enforced labour.

That the majority of the dissatisfied wage-earners understand the historic and economic causes of their enslavement; how it has come about

that, instead of controlling the great mechanical, chemical, electrical powers to create wealth, engendered by the social progress of the human race, they themselves are over-mastered by the very vastness of these powers, which might easily provide health and enjoyment, luxury and leisure for all;—that the mass of the discontented and disinherited comprehend the reasons for their enforced subservience to the owners of the means of making and distributing such wealth, is far too much to say as yet. This calls for an amount of study and an intelligent appreciation of sociological development to which they have not yet attained, or have attained, at any rate, in only one country.

Strikes, Syndicalism, Anarchy are but varying forms of restless working-class ignorance, or despairing revolts against unendurable oppression. There is nothing in strikes themselves, whether for a rise of wages for all, or for the enactment of a minimum wage for the lowest grades of labour in any industry, which can emancipate the propertyless workers, or render them less dependent upon the owning and employing class who make profit out of their unpaid labour. On the contrary, the most successful strikes under existing conditions do but serve to rivet the chains of economic slavery, possibly a trifle gilded, more firmly on their limbs. Trade Unions, by admitting wages as the permanent basis of the industrial system, virtually condemn their members to continuous toil for the benefit of the profit-takers so long as that view obtains. The organisation of the Trade Unions is sometimes useful: their theory of society is hopeless.

Syndicalism is barely worth criticising. That each set of workers in every particular trade should set themselves by strikes, sabotage, ca' canny, and the rest of it, to render it impossible for the owners

to work that trade to a profit, and thus should obtain possession of the whole industry for themselves apart from all the rest of society, is as anti-social and hopeless a proposition as has ever been made; and is none the better for the fact that so many who have advocated this unintelligent method of warfare have gone over to the enemy when they saw the folly of their own propaganda.

Obviously, a policy which aims at securing the coal-mines for the coal-miners alone; the railways for the railway men alone; the cotton-mills for the cotton operators alone; the iron-works for the engineers, boiler-makers, and iron-workers alone; and the houses for the bricklayers, carpenters, and plumbers alone; needs only to be bluntly stated to be repudiated as utterly ridiculous in a community which is dependent for six-sevenths of its food-supply upon sources outside of these islands, and in every department of industry upon exchange, not upon division of product. And the majority of the people in this island are not producers or necessary distributors.

That strikes, inevitable as they may be, are but the least valuable weapon at the disposal of the workers—even when, as in the case of the Transport Workers, they give a temporary success, or, as with the coal-miners, succeed in holding up the entire trade of the nation for weeks—can scarcely be disputed. Yet they have produced some remarkable men, a few of whom I have seen very close. It is safe to say, however, that no Trade Union official ever willingly enters upon a strike. The cry raised against the "paid agitator" and the "unscrupulous Trade Union fomenter of discord" is absurd to any one who knows the facts. Strikes mean to the President or Secretary not only a harassing increase of responsibility, excessive and ill-paid additional work, but a great probability

that, win or lose, he may forfeit his job to a more active and popular member of his trade than himself, who has gained a dominant position during and in consequence of the strike. Such men as James Mawdsley, Broadhurst, or Burnett of the older school of Trade Unionists, or George Barnes, Tillett, Thorne, or Hodge of the newer, have never advocated a strike in their lives. Their action has invariably been in the direction of moderation in this matter, knowing, as they all do, the terrible privations and sacrifices entailed by even a short cessation of labour, and the comparatively small advantage gained, as already noted, even by complete success. Barnes, essentially a moderate and, indeed, though personally courageous, in economic action almost a timid man, was actually ousted from his post as Secretary to the Amalgamated Engineers, the most powerful Trade Union in Great Britain, because his judgment was in favour of peace, of control by the entire organisation over recalcitrant individual branches, and of keeping agreements whose basis had not been vitiated by an entire change of conditions.

All the recent strikes have been revolts of the rank and file of the members of the Unions. In the case of the coal-miners' strike the whole of the miners in the great Federation of the United Kingdom took control of the entire movement themselves, and absolutely refused, as the result proved, to allow even their chosen delegates to decide on their behalf—which was one of the difficulties of the situation. Afraid of being jockeyed, as they considered, by the superior dexterity and ability of the politicians, as the railway men were in 1907 and 1911, they were determined that nothing short of their own vote should settle the question of going in. Those delegates who were most closely in touch with the men, such as

Stanton, Hartshorn, and Smillie, were well aware of this, and the fact that, in spite of the weakening of some of the English "leaders," there was no breakaway among the miners for four solid weeks, and there was no possibility for the coal-owners to play off one section of the Federation Miners against another, as they had always been able to do before, proves that what I state is true.

During the strike of the Transport Workers also, in the summer of 1911, Tillett, who is one of the ablest organisers, as he is one of the first orators in the Trade Union movement—had his hand forced by the men themselves, and, though he did his best for them in every way, and represented them admirably throughout, besides speaking from first to last with quite amazing eloquence and vigour, he refused to take personal responsibility for the strike, and referred every difficult question for decision to the men themselves at their great public meetings. He and they won; but he knew, if they did not, that it was a touch-and-go affair; that but for the fine weather and the hot sun, the strikers could not have stood out so long; and that, even as it was, the feeling of the East End working class, sympathetic at first, was beginning to turn bitterly against the strikers, as hundreds, and even thousands, of families began to feel the pressure of want owing to the suspension of all trade. In my opinion Tillett, who is one of the old guard of the great Dock Strike, deserved the highest credit for the manner in which he kept his head and handled the situation in that most difficult time. But powerful as his influence was, and vigorously and judiciously as he used it, not Ben Tillett, still less his coadjutor Gosling, organised or rushed on that strike. It was the doing of the men themselves, who were quite ready, and even eager, to use the services of their tried and trusted

leaders; but who would have pushed them aside relentlessly in favour of other probably less capable representatives, if they had refused to go forward on the dockers' and carriers' behalf.

In Liverpool the case was virtually the same, but the real state of things was shown still more markedly. Tom Mann is the boldest, most vehement, and most stirring agitator and organiser I have ever known. If his mind had been capable of continuous action along one definite line, Mann would, in my opinion, have been also the most formidable leader of the proletariat of our day. But, as John Burns once said of him, "Tom has a tidal intellect." It is true, and I have admired him and been friendly with him in all its ebbs and flows, in spite of his most provoking tendency to start little whirlpools of his own outside of the main stream of work for the time being. His dark black hair, his fiery eyes, his energetic face and figure give Mann a distinctly foreign appearance. For life, go, humour, vigour, inexhaustible and unflagging energy, I have never met Tom Mann's equal.

After spending the whole of the day-time in speaking, organising, persuading, denouncing, pervading the entire area of disturbance to an extent that made him appear to be ubiquitous, after a display of zeal and a manifestation of enthusiasm enough to have exhausted half a dozen even good men at this arduous business, Tom would turn up at tea or supper as gay and cheery and full of fun as if he had never done any work at all. His laugh would go ringing through every room in the place, he would stir up the most apathetic and weary to fresh work, and then, at Heaven knows what hour of the night or morning, the weary innkeeper would cajole or entreat him, still carolling, to go to bed, only to be up again the following

morning first of all and more vehement than ever to begin the same game over again. And this has gone on not for a year or two, or even for ten years or fifteen years. For a good deal more than a quarter of a century, since Tom Mann came up to our house in Devonshire Street in 1884, he has been carrying on in the same way, not only in Great Britain but in Australia and elsewhere.

There is no end to him. And his knowledge and charm of manner are equal to his marvellous vitality. Moreover, of all the Labour leaders I have ever met, Tom Mann is the one who, however successful he may be, puts on the least "side." After a speech which has roused his audience to the highest pitch of almost hysterical enthusiasm, down Tom will step from the chair in the open air, or from the platform in the hall, and take names for the branch or organisation, and sell literature to all and sundry as if he were the least-considered person at the gathering. Even those who differ most widely from him cannot but respect him, for he has assuredly gained nothing personally by his stupendous efforts.

At the time of writing Mann is, or believes himself to be, a Syndicalist, and is violently anti-political in his exhortations. More's the pity. I am in hopes the tide will soon turn and flow again the other way. But as to his personal influence even in this hopeless camp there is no doubt whatever, though the disintegrating effect of his oratory and adjurations is speedily apparent when he goes away. Yet even Tom Mann himself in Liverpool, when he was the darling of the proletariat of the entire city, could not induce the workers who were out on strike to return to their employment when he thought it highly advisable for them to do so. They were immensely obliged to him for his services but they declined to accept his judgment.

This is another weighty piece of evidence in support of my contention that not the leaders but the rank and file of the workers, whether Trade Unionists or Non-Unionists, were and are the real organisers and fomenters of strikes. If a leader of Mann's quite exceptional qualities could not enforce his views in favour of peace upon the men he was leading, it is, in my judgment, quite ridiculous to contend that the men's minds are made up for them by the speakers and organisers they employ.

There is one point in regard to strikes which has now and will probably still more later have a sinister significance. Is it or is it not well that the army should be used in order to protect the property of the employers, or to ensure that the minority of the workers in any particular trade shall be able to return to their employment against the feeling and vote of the majority? It is scarcely too much to say that opinion on this matter is sharply divided between the two camps which carry on the inevitable class war of our day.

On the one hand, it is argued by employers and their well-to-do sympathisers of every grade: "No State and no Government can hand over, under existing conditions, the real power to preserve or destroy property, to ensure security for life and limb, or to uphold the right of men who are ready to accept a given rate of wages for their labour, to a determined or perhaps an infuriated mob. That means and must mean the installation of downright anarchy at short order. Troops are only called out against strikers or any other body of citizens when the police have failed to cope with the tumult, when rioting and dangerous disorder have begun, and when the magistrate on the spot, recognising that the case has passed beyond the possibility of civil control, has read the Riot Act calling upon all peaceable and law-abiding citizens

to disperse and go home, and has then appealed to the National Government to put soldiers as well as police at the disposal of the local authorities.

"If, even as a last resource as it is to-day, this is prohibited, then all law and order, as against determined and hostile strikers, is at an end, and property-owners would be obliged in self-defence and in defence of their property to arm themselves and their friends as well as their retainers, and perhaps outsiders hired for the purpose, in order, as citizens, compelled to protect their possessions and their lives, to perform a duty which they had hitherto supposed they supported and paid the Government to discharge for them. Can it be wished to reduce society to its primitive elements in this way? Are not those who have invested their money and managed their business according to the law, entitled to the fullest protection of their property under the law in return for the taxes which they pay, even though the undesirable display and use of military force should become indispensable in order to attain this essential end?

"The Army, it is urged, is a National Force not a class force. That may be readily granted, and yet what higher national service can the army perform than to prevent the nation from drifting into downright anarchy? Even from the workers' point of view have not they as individuals the right to deal with their labour as may seem good to them which should be protected against the tyranny of the majority, though that majority may have some or even much right on its side? No Government has the right to sacrifice personal freedom to the dictation of the local or even the national majority of a particular class or trade. If force is to be used, as it is used, by the Trade Unionists to tyrannise over and terrorise a minority, eager to work on the conditions offered, surely in this case also it is the

manifest duty of the Government to meet force by force, in the interest of fair play for the whole community."

Nobody can deny that, with society as it exists to-day, this constitutes a case for military interference in the last resort. And I have endeavoured to put it as strongly as I can.

The case for the strikers is this: "We are the disinherited of the earth, we have no property whatever except the power to labour in our bodies, which we are obliged to sell to those who are ready to buy it, by the week or month, in order merely to gain enough in money to enable us to buy the absolute necessaries for ourselves and our families. Many of the trades we are compelled to work at are extremely unhealthy, and some are dangerous both to life and limb. Of all this no account is taken. The one object of the employers who buy our labour power is to get it at as low a price in wages as they can. By cutting down our pay for the same or a greater amount of work they increase their profits from the same source that they gain all their profits, namely out of our unpaid labour and the value created by us over and above the actual wages which we receive in money.

"When, therefore, we strike to obtain higher wages, or to prevent the remuneration we are in receipt of from being cut down, we do but endeavour either to secure for ourselves a portion of the unpaid labour which the employer embodies in saleable value for nothing, or to prevent him, or the Manager of the Company or Combine, from exacting still more of that unpaid labour without return.

"Nothing but a sense of desperate wrong would drive us to strike, for we know what privation that involves, not only for ourselves but for our wives

and children. It is we who have dug the pits, made the machinery, erected the factories, constructed the railways and tramways and built and launched the ships. Yet they are owned by those who had no share in creating them and perhaps have never even seen them. If, therefore, we are forced to lay down our tools and thus to fight despairingly against our employers, at least do not strengthen and embolden them by promising them at the very outset the support of the troops of the National Army drawn from the unemployed of our class, who, after having been used to lower our wages by their competition in the field of industry, are brought in as purchased men of the Government to be the determining factor on the field of economic struggle. Even should the safety of property be endangered by the fury of starving men the lives of the producers are far more valuable to the country, leaving aside the moral aspect of the question, than the most valuable of the buildings or machinery which the soldiers are called in to protect by slaughtering or maiming their fellow-men. Manifestly, too, the defence of the minority of the wage-earners in an industry, against persuasion, or even against threats and violence, is taking sides against our interests and in favour of the employers, when these blacklegs are upheld by police and even by soldiers in going to work upon conditions which the more independent among us cannot agree to. We protest therefore against national forces, largely paid for by us and manned by our class, being used to make ill-paid wage-slavery permanent, by shooting down Englishmen who rise up against it."

These are the two sides to the strife, and it shows what a chaotic society ours is when such arguments can be honestly brought forward on the one part and on the other. That those who

produce the wealth are entitled to infinitely the greater consideration seems to me indisputable.

And yet, as I felt in the case of the Gas-Workers' and General Labourers' Strike, the case of the so-called "blacklegs" is hard. Here are agricultural labourers half-starved on 12s. to 15s. a week. They learn that unskilled men are out on strike who are earning 32s. a week. To the countrymen this weekly earning means luxurious living. Up they come to take the places left vacant in consequence of the strike or lock-out. Is it reasonable to ask them to go on working at the paltry wage of 12s. when they can nearly treble it by blacklegging, especially when it is quite certain the gas-workers will never trouble themselves about raising the wages of agricultural labourers?

That same question was put to me very straight by a blackleg himself. I was remonstrating with him on acting against the interests of his class and thus playing into the hands of the capitalists. "I don't know much, Sir, about class and capitalists. What I do know is that I don't get more than thirteen bob a week, one week with another, at the outside, and after paying for our bit of a cottage it is pretty near starvation for us and the kids. Here's a job going at over thirty shillings—why shouldn't I take it? I have as much right to it as the lot that's here." There was no answer to that from the point of view of the individual. My blackleg could scarcely be expected to regard the matter from the standpoint of general sociology and the class war. Nor do I see that, except upon those grounds, he could be expected to sacrifice himself for the sake of the comparatively highly paid gas-worker. That is where the employer has hitherto had such an advantage in dealing with unskilled labour.

He can always play off the country against the town.

Even the last strike of the Transport Workers, with all their improved organisation, brought out the blacklegs in considerable force and naturally provoked a great deal of ill-feeling on the part of men whose places they were taking. Throughout the strike the Government virtually helped the employers, though Sir Edward Clarke's judgment showed that they had broken their agreement to a far greater extent than the men; and Sir Edward Clarke is an out-and-out Conservative. The representative of the workers who was most to the front was once more Tillett. He was regarded as the firebrand of the whole affair. Tillett, so it was said, was responsible for the strike itself, and kept it going when it would otherwise have broken down. Whereas the fact is, as has been the case with many of these recent strikes in regard to the leaders, that Tillett, who was against the strike himself at that time, was outvoted and overruled; but then, the strike having once begun, devoted himself night and day to a hopeless endeavour to make it a success.

The reasons why most sober and judicious men opposed the strike were that the Transport Workers had not accumulated sufficient funds to remain out; that it was better to put up with breaches of faith by the small employers for a time than to rush into a bitter struggle unprepared; that the success of last year could scarcely be repeated to any certainty this; and that it was impossible under such conditions to rely upon sympathetic and simultaneous strikes on the part of the railway men and others. These views have been justified by the event. The terrible starvation and suffering of men, women, and children in East London have been undergone for nothing,

and public feeling has been to a large extent against the strikers.

Most of the active strike leaders understand the situation perfectly and know that only by a combination of political and industrial action can the wage-earning class hope to gain anything by peaceful means. As they are not trained and disciplined to use force, and decline to accept compulsory service, even in the form of a non-militarist citizen army, obviously political action, however discouraging it may have been hitherto, is far the more effective weapon of the two. The collapse of the Transport Workers' Strike, after a desperate struggle for ten weeks, tends to prove this. The rejoicing of most of the capitalist newspapers at the defeat of the men, and in particular their denunciations of Tillett, the advocate of the men who was most to the front, ought to teach all workers what utter madness it is for them to vote for their masters as their representatives in Parliament.

But it will do nothing of the sort. Nay, the workers themselves cannot hold together. At the very crisis of the whole fight, when a failure to obtain blacklegs might have compelled the Government to interfere and force the employers to surrender, workers in other parts of London were actually giving up their jobs wholesale to go down to the docks and obtain the high pay which the Directors were giving, in order to get a proportion of the vessels unladen even by men quite unused to the task. I was loath to believe this. But a Socialist member of the Independent Labour Party living in one large block of working-class buildings in Westminster fully convinced me by incontestable evidence that this was going on quite commonly, and that "free labourers" were in a large number, if not in the majority, of cases men who were earning better wages at the employment they

abandoned, in order to go down to the docks, than the best-paid of the regular dockers received when in full work. It was natural that the strikers should attack these men; but as starvation and misery spread all round them, and the horrors of the situation became more acute, I wondered—yes, I wondered why they confined their assaults to members of their own class.

But that was by no means the only evidence of lack of solid combination where absolute unanimity was essential. When the strike was at its height the Labour Party was not only quite half-hearted in its support of the strikers, which might have been excused if not pardoned on the ground that no steps had been taken before coming out to secure such support, but some of its leading men actually played into the hands of the individual employers and the Port Authority by denouncing the leaders of the Transport Workers; though one of them, Will Thorne, is a member of the Parliamentary Labour Party himself, and two or three others, such as Lansbury and O'Grady, were speaking daily for the men at Tower Hill. Not only so, but when Tillett took a leaf out of the book of the old Hebrew "peaceful persuaders" with sword and javelin and battle-axe, and prayed to Jehovah to smite his enemies, Will Crooks of all men took it upon himself to repudiate this out-of-date enormity, and the Labourists in the House applauded him. Such scurvy hypocrisy and cowardice, I confess, revolted me, certain though I was that the strikers could not win, and I wrote to Tillett a strong letter of congratulation upon the magnificent pluck and endurance he had displayed throughout, though the strike was none of his making. I did say, however, that it seemed to me a little strange that he should pray to a God in whom he had no belief and who, if he existed, probably would never hear a whisper of

the Transport Workers' Strike—*leur planète a péri peut-être!*

And so once more the strikers were beaten—this time without any necessity for calling upon Mr. Asquith and Mr. Lloyd George, Mr. Ramsay Macdonald and the hirelings of the Board of Trade, to exercise their familiar chicanery and cajolery. Railway men, colliers, transport workers were all defeated and driven back to their penal servitude for life with the purchasing power of their wages decreasing all along the line. Knowing many of the leaders in each case, I repeat positively that these revolts were due to the action of the rank and file themselves and not to the counsels of their nominal chiefs.

It may be that the consequent failures will bring about reaction. It seems certain that what has occurred has not yet awakened the toilers to the truth of the situation under the conditions of to-day. That truth is that a wage-earner is only a Man when he votes for himself and his class, or when he fights for himself and his class. At other times, even when out on strike, he is merely a commodity. And as a striker, unless he becomes a great deal more than a mere striker and passive holder-up of business and traffic, he inflicts far more injury on himself, his family, and his class as a whole, than he does upon those who, by the monopoly of the means of production and distribution, compel him by the hunger-whip to work day in and day out, on the average, for a mere subsistence wage.

I end as I began. I regard strikes as a very bad weapon for the workers to use. But the deep-seated hatred fostered by recent failures may easily give rise to concerted action, which will not confine itself to mere peaceful "down tools" self-immolation. Any shock from without would precipitate

a state of things in this country with which the most dexterous politician or most convincing lay preacher would be quite unable to deal. The nice old bourgeois conviction that no catastrophe is now possible in human affairs may be unpleasantly shattered.

CHAPTER XX

COUNTRY LIFE

I AM, I believe, essentially a town and not a country mouse. Great cities suit me well, and I sometimes say that, though there may be others who know certain strata of London life better than I do, I do not believe there is a man living who knows this vast metropolis, from one end to the other, from bottom to top, so thoroughly as I do. When I hear well-to-do people say they like London, they adore London, they are never happy out of London, and so on, I feel inclined to ask them how much they really know of London. Not so much, I verily believe, as I did six-and-forty years ago, when I came back with an old college friend from my investigations into the cholera-haunted districts of the East End in 1866. London, to the ordinary man of the world, is practically comprised within the parks, the clubs, the main streets, and the prettier of the suburbs. The rest is outside his personal ken. He knows it only from books, newspapers, police reports, and the like. It is as if a student "knew" the British Museum by frequently visiting the Reading Room, and by continually inspecting the Elgin marbles and the Egyptian antiquities. To know London well is to long to destroy two-thirds of it at least. I should certainly die happier if I could see it done, or could feel quite sure, as I was passing over to the majority, that

the complete demolition would take place within a few years of my decease.

By far the greater part of London is hateful to the last degree. The very improvements which have been made since, say, 1870, the year of the great war, only make its hatefulness more revolting. "Hell is a city very much like London." My conception of Hell, even when viewed from the sputter, and fry, and crackle, and fizz point of view of the devout and Torquemadaish Puritan, is that it must be much better than London. I anticipate, at least, good company, and variety in the cookery, should my "*judex ergo cum sedebit*" condemn me for my virtues to a sempiternal roasting in Pluto's kitchen below-stairs. But I have seen, I now declare, in many parts of our metropolis, thousands of human beings living under conditions that nothing in Dante's Malebolge could surpass for sheer horror to those who had eyes to see. If that were to be my portion in any future sentient existence, without the power to relieve myself of its hideous squalor and misery by suicide, I should regard that as the worst punishment ever heard of.

As I think I have said before, I would not go through these detestable slums again on any account whatever, and it makes life appreciably less worth living to know that not only are they just as bad as ever they were to-day, but that they are hourly getting worse. Nevertheless, when that side of the mind is shut down, and a mental blind eye is turned also to all the mean monotony of fairly prosperous London, depressing enough by itself, the metropolis is a pretty good place, for the Londoner of means who knows how to live in it. I know of no other capital, for instance, in which a man can walk from his own door straight ahead for fully two miles through charming parks,

without crossing more than two public roads, and all in the very heart of the great city itself.

It is almost as impossible too to recall London as it was, as to put oneself back again in the Paris before Haussmann; when to get from the Boulevard des Capucines to the Palais Royal was quite an expedition, if the attempt was made to walk thither direct. What Londoner of to-day can imagine the time when there was no Thames Embankment, and mud-flats stretched all along from the Houses of Parliament to the wharves and warehouses near London Bridge; when Northumberland House and the great stone lion, with its stiff tail, which a crowd once collected to see wag, stood right across the road to the river from Charing Cross; when Holborn Viaduct was not, and Middle Row blocked Holborn itself; when good hotels were much scarcer than black swans, and Verrey's and the Café Royal were the only decent restaurants in the west; but when, as a set-off to all this, the old City of the Corporation was full of beautiful gardens, and it was impossible to get out of sight of a tree?

London of 1912, so far as the rich quarters of the metropolis are concerned, is certainly the deformed transformed, while most of what was previously attractive remains unspoiled. Moreover, fogs are nothing like so bad, on the whole, as they used to be, while communications have been miraculously bettered, and the eternal reek of manure has been replaced by the more pungent, but less disagreeable and dangerous smell of petrol. On the other hand, visions of sudden death, beside which De Quincey's description of the immolating stage-coach seems a trifling incident, meet the rash foot-passenger at every street corner, and huge locomotives, running at railway speed along the streets, slaughter peaceful citizens as a mere detail in their daily hunt for dividends.

Westminster, which, when I first lived in it, had an almost village life of its own, where I used to meet quite decent people wandering around in the morning in the loosest of footwear and the easiest of raiment, has now become an office-ridden financial centre. The mournful Aquarium, which told of a really fine idea born out of a due time, has been swept away, and in its place a great Methodist temple dedicated to the twin deities of Mammon and Jehovah — the London City and Midland Bank below, and the holy Nonconformist Conscience above—has been erected in garish rivalry to the old Abbey over the way ; while not very far off the Catholics, who still believe that some day they will come by their own, have built, as their new Cathedral in the meantime, what the late Cardinal Vaughan, looking down upon it from a flat in the neighbourhood, told me, forgetful of the appalling ugliness of Queen Anne's Mansions hard by, was the most hideous fabric he had ever beheld.

Not long ago, however, the wiseacres, who had begun to fool with our splendid open spaces, after the manner of regularised and regimented Berlin, were about to bring our charming St. James's Park, the most lovely bit of city-rural gardening in all Europe, into keeping with this well-arranged but somewhat depressing new Westminster. For once the long-suffering Londoner, who puts up tamely with restrictions that no other Englishman would submit to for a moment, raised a great and exceeding bitter cry. Lords and Commons put in their pipe to give additional shrillness to the popular protest, and, to the universal rejoicement of all, from nursemaids to dukes, the blundering Luttyens, with his bridge and his statues and his agreed commissions, was sent to Jericho, where I hope sincerely he fell among thieves.

Anyhow, London, for a man of means, is, as I say, a very jolly place to live in; but, after a time, in spite of all its pleasures, which so disgusted Sir George Cornewall Lewis, it is also a jolly place to live out of. So I have found at separated epochs of my existence. Then I feel that I must seek the repose and delights of English country life, which we all of us, I suppose, long for now and then, but which comparatively few can enjoy. Yet I have the sensation that I am not a genuine man of the country. I was not a bad shot, I believe; but I have not the slightest desire to go out and kill something because it is a fine day, unless that something should display an inclination to kill me. I could certainly ride a bit—at least I was told so in Australia and in the west of America, where one learns and unlearns a good deal in that exercise.

As to fishing, I *have* caught salmon, where nobody could help catching them; but I should be romancing more than ordinary if I were to say that I either like fishing or can fish. So as nearly all my shooting and hunting have been done outside of this island, and to fish I am ashamed, I admit the truth is stated when I am told that I do not know what real country life in England is. Nevertheless, I have met some not wholly irrational persons who could taste of great happiness in a garden, who could experience real pleasure from a walk, or a ride, or a drive over our wind-swept downs, with no object in view other than merely the joy to breathe and live, and I have myself experienced heartfelt satisfaction even in prising up a whole cart-load of impertinent daisies and offensive dandelions and plantains from a beautiful but neglected lawn.

So some years ago my wife and I took an old house, belonging to some cousins, in the village of Brasted, one of the prettiest parts of Kent. We were at once transported back into the long ago.

When my great-uncle, John Mayers, had the house in the beginning of the last century, and divided his time between the land and the law-courts, he was horrified to discover, fresh as he was from the supposedly barbarous West Indies, that the lunatics of the neighbourhood were paraded about the roads in chains, and were housed under conditions of indescribable abomination. This state of things he set himself to alter, and succeeded in getting them treated with a little humanity. It was the opinion of the inhabitants, and I thought so myself when I went down merely as a visitor many years after this, that a better-arranged and more generally comfortable village did not exist.

But we soon discovered its limitations and deplorable drawbacks. To begin with, we did not go to church, the good old parish church, such a nice, easy stroll on the Sunday through our fields at the bottom of the garden. Neither did we go to chapel, which, though on a lower level of sanctity, would have been an intelligible course heavenwards for revolutionary persons, who, it was said, actually addressed meetings of violent strikers in the open air. There was no disposition shown either to drive over to the little Catholic place of worship at Sevenoaks, barely six miles distant, which would have been better, after all, than nothing. Therefore, we must be not only subversionists, but, horror of horrors, Atheists! Think of that! Why, Lord Stanhope, the great man of the countryside, whom, with his wife and brother Edward, I had known pretty well in my pre-Socialist period, would barely let a farm to a Nonconformist farmer, and when he did, even at a high rent, he was none too pleased about it.

What, then, were such people as we doing in a district noted for its God-fearing piety, and in a house whose owners had always acted in strictest harmony with the prevailing creed? This would never do.

Happily, we were tolerably independent of these dwellers in the cloud-cuckoo-land of the day before yesterday. But as we found it impossible to get small matters attended to and trifling services rendered, by a sort of conscientious boycott on the part of those who really wanted wages, we did not consider it worth our while to undergo petty martyrdom where we went for rest and recreation, and my wife duly made her appearance in the family pew, and reverently took part in the service.

From that time forth no difficulty. We had propitiated the local fetish, and, my personal recalcitrancy notwithstanding, we were again on the plane of propriety, and were recognised as, like St. Patrick, having come of decent people. What was much more important, we got our washing done, and our various little odd jobs carried out with more or less alacrity in return for reasonable remuneration. There was one person in the household, however, who never forgave this temporary boycott. That was a dear Irish terrier named Nell, whom we inherited from those who had been there before us. Others might take it all as a matter of course, not she. Whence she obtained her powers of discrimination I know not; but certain it is, that from that time onwards this animal displayed the most violent animosity against all who had failed to work for us when asked. One whole family she literally hated. Not a single member of it was safe from her, though there was no evidence whatever that they had done her any harm at any time. Perhaps her canine materialism unconsciously sympathised with ours.

The rector of Brasted was cut out for an archbishop. It was the belief of his contemporaries at Trinity College, Dublin, I have heard, that this was the precise position in the ecclesiastical hierarchy

that he was destined to occupy. I have an idea that he was of the same opinion himself. I saw no reason why he should not have worn the queer garb associated with such a dignitary when I made his acquaintance towards the close of his life. For he was well read, capable, and eloquent, with the sort of benevolent air one associates with a well-paid and influential father of the Church spiritual and temporal. Yet there the Rev. Mr. Rhind was in bad health, occupying a country living with a declining income, and giving the impression that he would not regret the coming of the day when he would bury himself in his own churchyard, having previously interred his capacity in this country parish.

I do not know that there is any sadder spectacle to witness than the decay of the man who might have been, and who incidentally admits to you it has been all his own fault that he did not arrive at the heights which he had set out to climb in his youth. Rhind was distinctly of this type, nor was it difficult to see why he had failed. A less able man might have done very much more with the people around him than he did. One of his daughters, for instance, saw much more clearly than he into the nature and disposition of the people about them, and some of her sketches of men and women in the neighbourhood were quite admirable. But the rector mourned on, and refused to be comforted.

The aristocracy of the neighbourhood, outside Colonel Tilling, whose family I remembered when they were weaving a big fortune out of cotton, what time I was a boy who thought himself a man in Stockport and Manchester, lived on the hill-side leading up to the ridge called the Chart, from which is to be seen one of the finest views of its kind in England. They were mostly bankers, stockbrokers, and other people of high financial

degree, whom we knew slightly, or not at all, who clustered together on this healthy spot.

As to its healthiness I had good evidence. In travelling up to London, I made the acquaintance of an enthusiastic rose-grower, who somehow appeared as if he were not entirely satisfied with what he was doing. I asked him what had brought him to Brasted, and had induced him to perch himself up at such an elevation, whence the walk to and from the station was no light task for a man of his years in bad weather? "Oh," said he, "I came down here thirteen years ago to die of cancer." "Thirteen years ago!" I exclaimed, startled, "and not dead yet, and you look pretty well, too. It can't have been cancer." "Not only can it have been, but it is," was the reply, "and I frequently suffer terribly, but there can be no doubt the air here has given me strength to bear up against it, and, to some extent, to check its spread. The doctor who recommended me here is surprised at the result." Whether or not potassium or radium furnishes an alleviation or a cure for this frightful disease, the influence of that locality on the malignant growth ought to be more fully tested.

Anyhow, there were two men living up on the Chart who were well worth knowing. One was Mr. Okey, who, with his wife, had a cottage there, and the other was the famous French artist, M. Legros, to whom Okey introduced me. It seemed to me a favourable instance of our English catholicity in some directions that here was Legros, who not only could not, but would not, speak a word of our language, and rather prided himself on his narrow-minded obstinacy, engaged as an official professor of Art in London. I cannot imagine a similar case in Paris, Brussels, Berlin, or Vienna. However, he was as bigoted on this matter of acquiring English as Rochefort, though for different

reasons. What made the thing more ridiculous was that his wife was an Englishwoman, and that his daughters, I was told, were much more English than French. However, there it was, and had I not been able to speak French I should have been unable to hold any conversation with the old man. Probably, indeed, he would have preferred not to see me. As it was, we got on very well. To hear him denounce the impressionists was an education in forcible, not to say vituperative, French.

His opinion of them could be put on the same lines as Henry James's view of Zola. The comparison occurred to me as Legros sat and fulminated against the unfortunates who had roused his unquenchable wrath, with a ferocity that age had deprived of none of its vehemence. I was walking back with Henry James very late one night from Putney to Piccadilly more than thirty years ago: walking because we had missed the last train, there were no 'buses, and cabs and cabbies had betaken themselves to their rest. It was a fine night, and the long walk and conversation were to me very pleasant.

But Zola! I had said good words of Zola, and had declared that the novelist was a very great writer. Then it came. Henry James, who, truth to say, I had always looked upon as a man of a mild temperament, one not given to letting his parts of speech get the better of him under any provocation whatsoever, vouchsafed to me his ideas on Zola and that unholy Frenchman's degradation of literature, with a power of expression that left nothing to the imagination, in respect either of directness or force. He stood still in the middle of the road to do it: he could not spare breath for perambulation while the paroxysm lasted. Of course there was a great deal of truth in his criticisms. Zola is often quite unnecessarily detailed, and too photographic in his descriptions; he also

depicts scenes and uses words, which, however justifiable, and no matter how pronounced, would grate upon nerves far less sensitive than those of Henry James. But the power of the whole thing, the realistic imagination of it, like the scene I mentioned in *Germinal*, when the priest comes forward and stands between his people the strikers and the soldiers sent to shoot them down, Zola himself being a violent anti-Catholic—well, Zola needs no defence from me, and he will long survive the attacks of another literary artist writing on quite a different plane.

So it seemed to me to be with Legros and his favourite enemies. He smote them, from Manet upwards or downwards, hip and thigh, with great slaughter. Not one of them was left whole when he had finished his diatribe. Scattered fragments of undeserved reputations littered the floor. It was all exceedingly interesting. For once at least I was a good listener. It was a lesson in full-flavoured art criticism, and the powerful head, with its fine white hair, gave impressiveness to the utterance, which swept on unbroken, never at a loss for a word. In fact, the whole interview impressed me much, and perhaps, since then, I have detected less of hardness and lack of sympathy than I previously thought I saw in the artist's own work.

I speak as a fool. What do I know about high art, silver point, and technicalities generally? Nothing. But I cannot forget how, one day, being in Colnaghi's, I saw a picture which seemed to me no better than a series of blobs of colour thrown on the canvas anyhow. Knowing nothing then of impressionism, I asked Mr. M'Kay what on earth it all meant. "Come to this end of the room," was the answer, "and you won't need to ask again." And that was true enough. A most

powerfully-depicted scene, peopled with figures full of colour and life, broke right in upon me, and I felt instinctively I was face to face with an effort to break through the somewhat finicking conception which takes it for granted that you can see the faces and descry the folds in the garments of men and women who are standing a hundred yards off. All that really can be seen at such a distance is, of course, the general figure, attitude, pose, and colour. But not a word of this did I so much as hint at to Legros. I did not know enough to venture such a statement. I was content to leave, convinced that I had been listening to a very able man, who perhaps did not try quite as hard as he ought to comprehend a phase of art which might contain something more than the germ of a new and valuable development. But if the "Impressionists" awakened in old M. Legros a prophetic fury of almost Hebraic fervour, what would he have said of the Post-Impressionists whom Sir W. B. Richmond has so conscientiously belaboured? Though Legros has joined the majority, full of years and of honour, I none the less flee in imagination from his wrath to come.

Mr. Okey, who made me known to M. Legros, was a Socialist of the early days, who had withdrawn from active participation in the movement, partly owing to the pressure of his own work, and partly, I think, from not unnatural disappointment at the manner in which the Socialists, or semi-Socialists, themselves, have thrown away their opportunities. He is, I consider, better informed upon the details of the development of modern Italy than, perhaps, any man in Europe, and many Italians are themselves of that opinion. It pleased me to find that a careful survey of all the circumstances had led him to the conclusion which I had come to myself, when the events with which he

was dealing were quite fresh, that Cavour's masterly statesmanship, which neglected literally no means to attain its end, had not received at the time of our conversations full recognition even from his own countrymen. Matters have improved since then in this respect.

But it was not necessary to go to Brasted in order to hear attacks on Impressionism, or to confer upon the resurrection of Italy. What the city could not afford us was that indescribable charm derived from an exquisite old lawn, partly fringed by the old, uncultivated flowers, which recalled the delights of childhood, with the ancient tower of the church peering out above the trees across the fields, and the grass-covered hills stretching away beyond in the distance. There was no rush of restless human endeavour here, no thought of appointments to keep, or of speeches to deliver. The songs of the birds, the ripple of the brook, destined later to be a river, the swish of the wind among the leaves, the glimpse of a heron as it sailed away to its ancestral fisheries, the pleasure of lazy conversations with intimate friends on everything above and below which led no whither—these are the things which rejoice the mind and refresh the body in the country, and sweep away those tendencies towards cynicism, bred in the town-keeping citizen by study of human nature, lack of exercise, the turmoil of life, and too good fare.

Besides, no part of England is fuller of historical memories than Kent. There, for instance, in that chalk pit, whose wide, white mouth you can just descry through the foliage, lives a colony of snails, great in size, and, doubtless, of marvellous succulence: true Escargots de Bouillon. How came they hither those erst well-cared-for and valuable, but now despised and rejected, foreign slugs? That is a question indeed. A thousand years in rural

Kent is as one day, and one day as a thousand years. Those snails carry with them ancient history written all over their shells of long descent. They were imported from Gaul, I would have you to know, what time the Roman legionaries paraded this charming valley, and possibly piled their spears against that worn-out old stump of an oak. The snails themselves were specially brought here, so tradition has it, in order to tempt the appetite and arrest the disease of the beautiful wife of the Roman pro-consul, who was dying of consumption not far from this place. Agrippa, or it may have been Albinus, called to see her as she lay sick. How few of us remember that our Roman predecessors in piracy lived in this island for some 500 years, and had an uncommonly good time of it too, if we are to judge by their disinclination to leave. 500 years! That would take us back in our own history to the reign of Henry IV.—a good long time ago.

But the old pilgrim road just skirts that snail-haunted quarry, and then winds down the hill to mount up again on the opposite slope, on its way to Canterbury, after passing by the village. Along this very same bridle-path rode Chaucer and his party on their jolly journey towards the great shrine, which has lasted even unto this day. And so it is everywhere around. Ightham Mote, Knole, Penshurst, Heaver, all take us back into the days of long ago, and we wish sometimes, maybe, that we could exchange even the enjoyments of our epoch for the rougher times, when fine Jack Cade drew his revolutionary contingent in great part from this district, and marched on London with full stomach for the fight. Not much revolution, or fight, or stomach either, hereabouts just now, I fear. The yeomen of the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries would look down with

pity, not unmingled with contempt, on their descendants of our day, though they never got what they strove for any more than we do.

But Brasted is a pretty village. There is no doubt about that. The place has quite a prosperous air about it. The cottages, most of them of the old black barge-board variety, look clean and well-kept, the windows have nice white curtains; there is, or was, until the confounded motor-cars made life a burden with their dust and stench and danger, an abiding sense of peace and comfort about the whole place for everybody. Good shops, well-built and well-ordered public-houses, a handsome public hall—quite a show village, in fact.

All on the outside. The labourers are badly paid, badly housed, and badly fed. The schools are anything but what they ought to be. The outlook for energetic young men, if any such there happen to be, is hopeless. The curse of charity is over the entire village. Thus the highest wages paid to labourers are fifteen shillings a week, with none of the easements common in the old time, and most of the farmers pay less. Rents for cottages are quite monstrous, running up as high as nine shillings a week for by no means good dwellings. As a result those very cottages, whose prettiness attracts the passer-by, present problems of overcrowding and squalor similar in kind, and differing only slightly in degree, from those which press for solution in the great cities.

The matter of feeding was, as it so chanced, looked into, and recorded by an official inspector of the Government when we were living at Brasted House. This lady was the sister of the wife of one of the great hill-men. But she refused to stay in his house, took lodgings in the village, and, to her honour, be it said, did her work thoroughly, without fear and without favour. She proved beyond

all possibility of question that the working families of Brasted did not get enough to eat, and that for some days in each week turnips were the principal item of their fare. And then there was a pretty to-do. The turnip-eaters themselves rose in their wrath against this exposer of their cherished but shamefaced poverty. It was an imputation upon the village of Brasted to tell the world how its inhabitants existed on inferior nutriment, and lived for the most part pigged together in unwholesome proximity. I have often observed that. The city workers themselves, who are crushed down by economic forces into the direst penury, not unfrequently resent bitterly the publication to the world of their sad estate. And here in the country it was the same. It was worth a couple of black eyes to any man to whisper the word "turnip" in Brasted for many a long day after this too truthful official report saw the light. Then all went on just as it was before.

The whole of the facts bore out what I had foreseen and predicted so long ago as 1883, when I briefly analysed the condition of the agricultural districts in my *Historical Basis of Socialism*. And one interesting detail for me in the matter was that some of the most terrible facts in relation to all this woeful depression for the people and its inevitable continuance all through the country-side, were brought out in the Agricultural Report of my old friend, Mr. Edward Stanhope, on whose brother's estate this same village of Brasted was placed. If I had not had enough work of the kind in hand already, on a much more extensive scale, I should certainly have started an agitation in this district; as, even under the present law, and in the economic conditions existing, things need not have been as bad as they were. But I went down to Brasted to get out of the storm and stress of the

class war, and for once in my life I refrained from stirring up strife, where strife was greatly needed.

The longer I live, however, and the more I see of English life, in all its various manifestations, the more convinced do I become that nothing short of complete social transformation can do any good at all in the long run. Alike in town and in country, we have arrived at the end of a social and economic period.

My finish up at Brasted was a serious illness, which is of no interest to anybody but myself, except for one thing. Foreign medicine men speak with enthusiasm of our surgeons, and I have heard it said by a foreign doctor of repute that you will find better and safer surgery in an English village than you will often discover in big towns on the continent of Europe. But of our M.D.'s, as a whole, they have a very poor opinion. The best, they say, are very good—and that I have myself sufficient reason for accepting as a sound judgment—but of the general run of them—beware! When I fell ill in the country, as I did, I sent for the local doctor, who, when he saw I got no better for his treatment, suggested I should send for a London physician. I did so, and for my sins my choice fell upon a foreigner of very high reputation and position in the metropolis, whom I happened to know personally, and whom, in fact, I had consulted before. He came, and had his will of me for a fortnight. So bad did I get under his care that I began to reflect seriously as to the proximity of my latter end. So he went, and another Hippocrates, of even greater distinction, reigned in his stead.

He was very frank, if not what might be spoken of as optimistic. After a most thorough investigation of my suffering carcase, and elaborate inquiries from myself and my wife as to the nature of my malady —I was all the time in great pain—he stood at the

end of my bed and delivered himself in oracular fashion to the following effect: "It is obvious, Mr. Hyndman, that you are ill and in pain; but though I cannot tell you precisely what it is that is the matter with you, I will pledge my professional reputation you are not suffering from the illness for which you are being treated." That was very comforting to a person who was apparently doomed to suffer many things from many physicians. My wife naturally became seriously alarmed, and bethought her of my old friend, Dr. Henry Maudsley, who was quite certain to be able to diagnose the malady, whether he could cure it or not. So another old friend, who was much distressed at my apparently approaching dissolution, went in search of him; he very kindly travelled a long distance to see me, would accept of no fee — and here I am, able to poke fun at my own narrow escape from an untimely farewell to my fellow-humans. So the Englishman beat the foreigner after all.

We left Brasted because it lay too low, and the running up and down to London was so wearisome. But unless I die in my boots I should like to take my leave of life in the country. Even as I lay in my bed ready to depart, the sun and the view consoled me.

CHAPTER XXI

TRIUMPHANT BUREAUCRACY

I THINK I can take credit to myself for having done as much, in conjunction with my fellow Socialists, to expose and hamper the policy of Mr. Asquith's Liberal Administration as any man in this country, and if the Parliament men—Tories, Labourists and others—had performed their duty, inside the House of Commons, with only a fraction of the energy we displayed outside, the abominable measures which are now harassing and crushing our countrymen could never have become law. Speaking for myself, I have attacked and denounced the Liberal programme in speech and in print as vigorously and as frequently as I could, because I am firmly convinced, and everything that is going on now serves to prove I am right, that the system of costly, nominative and uncontrolled bureaucracy, general police control, and wholesale political jobbery—to the victors the spoils! —forced upon this people by the Prime Minister, Mr. Lloyd George, Mr. Winston Churchill, Lord Morley, Mr. Lewis Harcourt, and the rest of them, is the most corrupt and dangerous form of upper-class domination that has ever been attempted in Great Britain.

Though I have always held that capitalist Liberalism is the worst political enemy of the wage-earning masses, I was, I admit it with shame,

led to hope, when the Liberals came into power, with their stupendous majority, that something advantageous for the people might be obtained from them. Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman himself was a straight-forward man, and his strong speech about the thirteen millions of our fellow-subjects who, according to his in nowise exaggerated estimate, are always living on the boundary-line of starvation, gave me the impression that some serious efforts might be made to mitigate, even under the arrangements of to-day, the frightful evils of our profit-mongering system.

The passing of the Old Age Pensions Act, naturally, tended to confirm this idea. Though it fixed the age for receipt of pensions a great deal too late, granted to the aged poor too small an allowance per week, had no economic significance whatever—seeing that a man or a woman of over seventy was already removed from the sphere of active competition in the labour market—and acted from the fiscal side as little more than a rate-relieving measure; yet it had—or so I was ready to think—a really benevolent intention at the back of it, and might be followed up by more thorough-going proposals in the interest of the working people. Moreover, Mr. Lloyd George, who was supposed to be the standard-bearer-in-chief of progress in the direction of genuine palliatives and "Social Reform," had taken the right side at the time of the South African War, and had run considerable personal risk in his opposition to that disgraceful and inglorious campaign. We had all of us rejoiced at the pluck he had shown, when so many had been too cowardly to express the views they really held, or to oppose in earnest what they were induced to believe was the current of public opinion. It was possible, therefore, that, with such a leader as Campbell-Bannerman, the new

President of the Board of Trade might, as Minister, follow up the bold course he had taken as a free lance in Opposition, and break with the miserable Liberal traditions of treachery to the people in the interest of the capitalist class.

We were soon undeceived. There is, of course, no more adequate test of the disposition of a President of the Board of Trade towards the wage-earners than his regard for the lives and well-being of British seamen, who are becoming a less and less proportion of the sailors serving under the British flag, as well as for those men of other nationalities who are employed on British ships. A rough and ill-paid business, such as is life at sea, ought at least to be protected from avoidable dangers, even at some considerable loss of profit to the shipowners. That proposition would, in theory, be accepted by everybody.

Now it so happens that this very matter of the safety of the crews on board British ships had years ago been brought very prominently before the public, in consequence of one of the most dramatic incidents that has ever occurred in the House of Commons, and is still remembered. The man who was the hero of it was both a Capitalist and a Liberal. I was only in his company once, and then he seemed to me to be just an ordinary respectable specimen of the shrewd and lucky business man. But he and his wife had been horrified at the tales of coffin ships, worn out, ill-found and overladen, which were sent to sea by certain well-known firms in the north of England, in order to obtain the insurance money which the under-writers unwisely guaranteed.

He took the matter up in earnest, spared neither time nor money in verifying his facts, got up, as far as he could, a serious agitation against the coffin shipowners, and drafted a Bill enacting that no

vessels should be allowed to go to sea which were laden so heavily as to bring them down below a certain line, calculated beforehand, and marked distinctly upon their hulls. Long he worked to no purpose. The shipowners were too strong for him, and had too much influence with both political parties. Men's lives were of much less importance than high rates of freight, and now and then a judiciously manufactured windfall of insurance on a foundered ship. But this philanthropist of capitalism happened to be a member of Parliament, as well as a man of business and an agitator. After many disappointments, he got a good opportunity and moved his measure.

It was contemptuously rejected by the House of Commons. Then old Samuel Plimsoll—the thing is worth remembering as showing what even one man can do, who has a good cause and is not afraid to risk everything for it—then old Samuel Plimsoll rose to the occasion. He strode out on to the floor of the House and damned the whole of the members present as rogues and scoundrels, who deliberately doomed men to drown for the benefit of their friends the shipowners, sitting with them on Liberal and Tory benches. Of course, there were shouts of "Order, Order," and Plimsoll himself was hustled out. But the whole country was roused by the facts he had adduced, and the protest he had made. The Tory Party then in power were absolutely forced by public opinion to make the Plimsoll Load Line, or the Plimsoll Line as it came to be called, compulsory.

That remained the law of the land for a generation. I never heard any objection to it raised from any quarter, other than from shipowners who wished to go back to the old sailor-sacrificing system. But those same shipowners were indefatigable. They never lost a chance of enforcing

their view. They intrigued, they worked secretly, they bribed, they earwigged. All in vain. No President of the Board of Trade would listen to them.

But when the Liberal Party took office and Mr. Lloyd George was given the Presidency of the Board of Trade, the shipowners felt their opportunity was come. Why this should have been so I am not now able to say. But this I know, that there were rumours of a crucial change which would greatly benefit shipowners and raise the shares of shipping companies some time before any alteration was made. It was precisely the same state of things, in fact, as has lately been witnessed in the market for Marconi shares. And, sure enough, Mr. Lloyd George, as Liberal Cabinet Minister and head of the Board of Trade, did destroy the good work which had been forced upon the Tory Party by the independent Liberal, Samuel Plimsoll.

This was not done without protest. The whole waterside declared against the raising of the Load Line. I know of my own knowledge that it was pointed out to Mr. Lloyd George direct, and to the Liberal Cabinet as a whole, that this raising of the Load Line would inevitably entail the loss of hundreds, if not thousands, of sailors' lives on the overladen vessels. Evidence of accidents of the most horrible character also, due to deck cargoes, and photographs of the ghastly results to the seamen, were forwarded to members of the Cabinet. It was likewise shown to the Ministry quite clearly that by this action of Mr. Lloyd George and the Board of Trade the shipowners would be saved an expenditure of £8,000,000 they would otherwise have had to devote to building new vessels; which, of course, would have given that amount of extra employment to British

workers. The vast personal gains to the shipowners by the additional quantity of freight they would dump on their old craft were also recorded in full. No attention whatever was paid to all this weight of protest from men who knew.

The Load Line was raised, the sailors were sacrificed, and all is "good for trade." How is it, however, that Mr. Lloyd George, the friend of the people, initiated this change? How is it the Liberal Party supported it? How is it the Tory Party did not oppose it? Why did the Labour Party acquiesce in it? And how does it come about that, from that day to this, the whole capitalist press has been in a conspiracy of silence about it, and has suppressed all discussion upon it?

Those questions seem to me to call for an answer.

Then, again, it may have been all right from the point of view of the dominant class to cozen the railway men into an agreement with the Railway Companies which was absolutely harmful to them, even at the certainty of serious trouble later. But the men themselves, as I found myself everywhere, whatever may have been the views of their leaders, did not look upon the matter from that point of view at all, and regarded the Liberal Party as having hypocritically taken the part of the Directors while posing as protectors of the employees.

But here comes in something which I confess seems to me quite inexplicable, except on the same ground as accounts for the raising of the Load Line and the annulment of all that was obtained by Samuel Plimsoll's work and self-sacrifice. Railway men are killed to the number of many hundreds and maimed to the number of many thousands every year on our railways. The great majority of these accidents are easily avoid-

able, in fact would never take place if the rolling-stock were equipped with proper appliances. In the United States, where human life is supposed to be reckoned cheaper than it is here, automatic couplings on freight wagons are the rule. If automatic couplings were adopted here, it is universally admitted that these slaughterings and maimings would cease to occur. Why are they not made compulsory by the Board of Trade? Because that department is dominated by the railway interest on land, as it is dominated by the shipowner interest at sea. Human lives and limbs are cheap—there are plenty more where the others came from: automatic couplings are dear. And there are not fewer than a hundred Railway Directors sitting on both sides of the House of Commons as representatives of the Railway Companies in Parliament. So the Liberal Party with its majority of 270 burning, of course, with zeal to right the wrongs of the people, has never attempted in any way to prevent this butchery any more than the Tory Party did before it. And the railway men themselves still vote Liberal and Tory!

It is scarcely necessary to recall here how the official Blackleg Labour Exchanges were installed; how the colliers and the railway men were again cozened back into their penal servitude for life, with prices rising all along the line owing to the appreciation of gold and their wages raised very little if at all in comparison; how the troops and the police were used systematically on the side of the employers by the very same Ministers who were assuring the strikers of their heartfelt sympathy; how a bureaucracy was set on foot in order to reward Liberal agents and wirepullers all over the country, as well as Labourists who have been "really useful," by well-paid permanent

jobs under Government given without any test of qualification whatever. All this is well known. But the Insurance Act I myself have opposed from the very first, and as every word we Social-Democrats said about this iniquitous measure, and every prediction we made as to its effect is being verified as I write, I deal with it briefly from the point of view I have taken all along.

People are apt to forget that the German Insurance Act, from which the Act of Mr. Lloyd George and the Liberal Government is to all intents and purposes literally translated, was brought in and carried by Prince Bismarck with the avowed object of defeating the projects of the German Social-Democrats, and of keeping the German workers carefully regimented under Government and police control. I do not deny that the Act embraces certain advantageous arrangements for the people. But for this it could not have been forced even through the subservient Reichstag of Bismarck's day. Its main object was, however, that which I state. I discussed the whole of its provisions, both before and after its enactment in Germany, here in London with my old friend Dr. Rudolph Meyer, Bismarck's ablest private secretary. We both agreed that, although Social-Democracy had advanced too far in the Fatherland to be headed back by all the compulsion and deduction from wages and police control involved in the administration of the measure, it might for a time, by the additional power it placed in the hands of an unscrupulous Government and unscrupulous employers, lessen the rate of Social-Democratic progress. The whole measure, I repeat, was avowedly introduced and passed by Prince Bismarck, not simply to benefit the people, as has been alleged, but, by its contributory clauses, compelling the workers to pay their quota out of

wages, and by the additional power it gave to the bureaucracy, in order to keep the entire German working class permanently under Government and capitalist control. It was "State Socialism" of the very worst and most tyrannical type, applied in part to social advantage. There is not, and there never has been, any dispute about this, and Liberals themselves were among the most bitter critics of the entire Bismarckian measure at the time. No wonder.

That a Tory Government in this country, imbued with the spirit of reaction but forced by circumstances to attempt something in the way of State Insurance, in order to stave off really serious demands for social reconstruction — that a Tory Government, alarmed at the growth of Socialism in Great Britain, should copy and adopt Prince Bismarck's anti-Socialist methods, unsuccessful against Social-Democracy as a generation has shown them to be in Germany, is intelligible. Tory ministers might persuade themselves that in this direction, at any rate, lay the least danger for them and their party. But that a Liberal Government, with the largest majority ever seen in the House of Commons, should allow Mr. Lloyd George and two or three third-rate journalists to "convey" the whole of Bismarck's discredited Act and force it through Parliament, almost without discussion or modification, would seem to be incredible if it had not actually taken place.

That the Tory Party and the Tory press should at first, with one accord, welcome this enormous extension of direct taxation of the workers for the purpose of vouchsafing to them very slender and, in many cases, wholly illusory advantages was, I repeat, quite natural. The facts that the Act would be extremely costly; that it would give their political opponents the opportunity for organising permanent

official payment for their wirepullers out of public money from Land's End to John o' Groat's; and that the administration of the Act, at its most awkward and unpopular stage, might quite conceivably fall to their lot, were overlooked. It cannot be denied, in short, that the Tories accepted the measure "in principle." The Liberals have that against them all the time.

In this way it has come about that, in the United Kingdom, where hatred of the bureaucratic jack-in-office amounts, so to say, to a rational mania, all classes, but more particularly the working class, are now face to face with a direct, meddlesome, and irritating form of tyranny which is not only wrecking the Liberal and Radical Party, but is producing downright reaction in many directions. The Act, to begin with, entirely failed to give the benefits which its German original at least did secure to the people; and then Ministers —for Mr. Lloyd George is only one member of the Cabinet—have not secured proper medical administration for the most essential details of the scheme; while Trade Unions and even Friendly Societies, which not only promised but conferred far greater benefits upon their subscribers, will be injured by this compulsory Act. The country, even at the time of writing, does not understand fully what has been done.

The whole of the workers are being brigaded under the employers, after such fashion that every man among them is virtually placed at the mercy of a secret industrial police, and a far worse than the French description of *livret*, or than the enforced reporting of change of employment to the police as in Germany, has been forced upon our wage-earners. Even if all the benefits which Mr. Lloyd George claims for his pernicious Act were obtained (at the cost for administration alone

of some £2,000,000 a year), they would be very dearly purchased at such a complete sacrifice of working-class freedom. All this was pointed out categorically to the Government time after time, long before the Act became law, and its inevitable effect upon the workers was clearly set forth. Is it not certain, then, that, though backed throughout by the Labour Party in Parliament, this Insurance Act, with its direct tax upon the lowest of wages, and its bureaucratic regimentation of wage-earners, was deliberately introduced not in the interest of the working but of the employing class? About this I have myself no doubt whatever. It is all of a piece with the raising of the Load Line and the establishment of the Labour Exchanges.

Yet when Mr. Bonar Law declared in favour of the Repeal of the Insurance Act, the only course which was in any way reasonable, he was speedily made afraid of the sound of his own voice, and wrote a letter the next morning asserting that his intentions had been entirely misinterpreted. It so happened a well-known man of business, who is also a Tory member of Parliament, was with me on a matter quite outside of politics two days afterwards. I asked him how it came about that such a strange blunder was made? The Act was bad as well as unpopular, and it was impossible to amend it without cutting at its very root. The fact is, he replied, the members of the old Unionist Cabinet, Mr. Austen Chamberlain, Mr. Walter Long, Mr. Lyttelton, and others, got round Mr. Bonar Law and persuaded him that to oppose the Act would be ruinous to the party. A good thing, I thought, if it proved ruinous to both parties. But that incident showed how near together the Tory capitalists and the Liberal capitalists are on this question; though, for the time being, the

Tories are glad enough to use the feeling against the Act for political purposes.

On this point of the popularity of the Act my own experience goes for something. I was told that if I attacked the Insurance Act and showed up the Liberal Government and Mr. Lloyd George on public platforms, I should get very much the worst of it. It is not easy to intimidate me with that sort of rubbish. I determined, at any rate, to give the thing a good trial. I spoke to large meetings, free meetings, open to all, at, I think, nearly every big town in the country. I everywhere challenged questions and allowed discussion. Most of these meetings were overcrowded, and we had to turn people away. In Glasgow, a great Liberal city, the biggest theatre was so packed that the police had to come in and request some of the audience to go out; another smaller hall was crowded at the same time, and then there were still more people outside wanting to attend than were present. I certainly did not measure my phrases. I went at the Liberal Government and its Insurance Act root and branch. Nevertheless, it is the fact that not a Liberal or a Radical present took up my challenge.

I have never pretended that popularity or unpopularity is a test of the soundness or unsoundness of a proposal in itself. But it surely was a monstrous piece of injustice and despotic unscrupulousness that a measure of this character, got up avowedly on Bismarckian lines, should have been rushed through Parliament and forced upon the English people without any adequate discussion whatever. What the result of a Referendum upon it would be nobody now doubts. Yet, chaotic, and inquisitorial, and fraudulent as the Act undoubtedly is, men are being fined heavily for not complying with it, and a wholly irresponsible, irremovable, and

caucus-appointed bureaucracy has us entirely in its grip.

What is more intolerable still, these political persons thus pitchforked into place, to serve their Liberal masters at the public expense, are virtually exempt from criticism, and acquire "vested interests" to the tune of millions sterling against this nation. Exempt from criticism, I say; for if any one attempts to deal with these nominated-jacks-in-office, and to expose their incompetence and blundering, it at once becomes a matter of political importance, and all the party machinery is brought into play. Naturally, the Government stands by its own. The Radical bureaucrat, or the Tory bureaucrat, for that matter, can do no wrong. So the subservient political majority in the House of Commons, for the time being, decrees. The press of both factions takes the same view of these tchinovniks who have been set over us in our despite. They must not be exposed by name, because, forsooth, "they cannot defend themselves."

Thus, what with an unconstitutional caucus Cabinet, with amicable arrangements between the two front benches to play into one another's hands as against the democracy, with plutocrats and trusts as powerful here secretly as they are in America openly, with corruption going on in Public Departments and Parliament to an extent of which the National Telephone and Marconi cases are mere samples, it is no wonder that even large numbers of "intellectuals," who are not suffering under any sort of economic pressure, begin to look to democratic Socialism as a possible means of emancipation from as degrading a system of bureaucratic servitude as was ever forced upon any nation. The Germans, the worst part of whose methods we copy, do get some value for their militarist and bureaucratic tyranny. We virtually get

none. Who would have believed a few years ago that the Liberal Party would have saddled us with a complete system of irresponsible bureaucracy, merely to maintain the prestige and cover up the ignorance of an unscrupulous Minister? I hope to live to see a complete upset of the whole bad business.

The following Sonnet of Wordsworth's seems to hit off the position exactly:—

> It is not to be thought of that the flood
> Of British freedom, which, to the open sea
> Of the world's praise, from dark antiquity
> Hath flowed, "with pomp of waters, unwithstood"—
> Roused though it be full often to a mood
> Which spurns the check of salutary bands—
> That this most famous stream in bogs and sands
> Should perish; and to evil and to good
> Be lost for ever. In our halls is hung
> Armoury of the invincible knights of old:
> We must be free or die, who speak the tongue
> That Shakespeare spake; the faith and morals hold
> Which Milton held.—In everything we are sprung
> Of Earth's first blood, have titles manifold.

"In bogs and sands" is good. Bogs of Liberal intrigue and corruption; Sands of Tory ineptitude and cowardice!

CHAPTER XXII

NUNC DIMITTIS?

THUS, to use the language of the old time, having attained to the age of threescore years and ten, which the Scripture reckons as the sum of human life, with an active body, a sound mind, and a clear conscience, it seemed well unto those my comrades, with whom I had striven earnestly in the faith for nigh a full generation, to arrange for me a little festivity to celebrate the seventieth anniversary of my birth. On the 7th day of March, therefore, in this same year of grace 1912, there was gathered together at the Café Monico a goodly company, to wish me happiness in the few years that might still remain to me, and to tell me that I had done good service in the cause. It was to me a most moving occasion.

There were present at the table reserved for the "Old Guard" several with whom I had passed through many stirring scenes, and with whom I had worked on steadily through short turns of success and long stretches of apparent failure, until now at last we knew that the Socialism of our dreams and of our realities had taken final root among our countrymen, and that what we had done could not be undone for ever. That was something. I felt the past come back upon me almost as if it were the present, when I saw sitting there Quelch, and Lee, and Tom Mann, and Irving,

and Oliver, and Connell, and Hunter Watts, and Jack Williams, and Smith Headingley, and Barwick, and Lewis, and Marson, who had been in the movement from its inception and all through. Many of the scenes of the earlier days, some amusing, others sad, and not a few of them a little dangerous, came crowding in upon our minds as we looked round at one another and thought of the gaps in our ranks which time had made.

It seemed strange so many of us were left, and it was a kind thought of the few who remained from the period when it was said, almost with truth, that the whole of the active Socialists in London could be got into a four-wheel cab, thus to gather together old comrades and new, English and foreign, to greet me in this friendly fashion. One of the earliest Socialists present, Cobden Sanderson, an old Trinity friend, was at Cambridge in the same year as myself, our friendship having lasted unbroken for fifty years, and Mrs. Cobden Sanderson we had known in the cause for many a long year, both before and since she became an active suffragette. Mrs. W. M. Thompson, the widow of our old friend and enemy "Quasimodo" of the little *Radical*, now forgotten, and afterwards editor of *Reynolds*, was there with her beautiful daughter, to recall the pleasant agreements and scarcely less pleasant differences of the days of the Land League and the Radical revolt.

I was myself as much surprised as I was pleased at the numbers who came to the dinner, the cordiality shown, and the remarkable letters sent. The reasons for my astonishment are not far to seek. I have never perhaps cultivated the gentle art of making enemies to the extent practised by the original inventor of the phrase, but I have not, possibly, always been so careful as an active leader in a party ought to be to avoid giving offence, and I know that I am not unfrequently, though not

invariably from my defects, an awkward man to work with. The men and women present were ready to forget my many drawbacks in consideration of the work that in one way or another I had contrived to do. Our old friend and comrade Walter Crane was in the chair, and kindly designed the menu.

This brief report appeared in *Justice*, which has kept the red flag flying for eight-and-twenty years.

The gathering of Socialists at the Café Monico, on Thursday week, was remarkable in every way. They had met to acclaim the completion of his seventieth year by the founder of the revolutionary Socialist movement in this country—Henry Mayers Hyndman. It was indeed a brilliant throng that crowded the reception room prior to the dinner. With the exception of those who were ill or compulsorily absent, nearly all the men and women of mark in the London movement, and many who had travelled from distant towns, were there to bear their personal tribute to the "Old Man," and to his marvellous tenacity of purpose and matchless courage displayed over a period of three decades for the Socialist movement. There he stood, breezy, optimistic, vigorous as ever, a lusty old chieftain amid his clan, receiving their cordial salutations and wishes for many more years of service. For we all felt that this man had given us something of himself—that he had inspired our movement: so we gloried in that movement and in him. Leaders in art, literature and the drama sat at the dinner-table to do him honour; men of science and philosophy and leaders of Continental Socialism greeted him by letter and telegram; and the men and women present, drawn from all ranks of life (even a few from India) hailed Hyndman's seventieth birthday, and wished him a still longer life.

Walter Crane presided. Hyndman sat on his right, Mrs. Hyndman on his left. Next the guest of the evening was George Bernard Shaw, and to the left of Mrs. Hyndman was H. G. Wells. Jean Longuet, grandson of Karl Marx, had come over on behalf of the French Socialist Party; our comrade Vibant came from the Social-Democratic Labour Party of Holland; and J. Köttgen, of *Vorwärts*, represented Germany. As you looked round the tables you saw

the faces of those whose names have been familiar to the Socialist movement for many years past—Jack Williams, A. S. Headingley, Hunter Watts, Sam Oliver, Horrocks of Salford, James Macdonald, Tom Mann, Marson of Battersea, Dan Irving, Dr. and Mrs. Garrett, Mrs. Cobden Sanderson, Dr. and Mrs. Eder, Jim Connell, W. J. Barwick, Tom Lewis of Southampton, Victor Grayson, Fred. Hagger, Leonard Hall, Russell Smart, and many, many others.

The reception delayed the dinner; the dinner in turn was a lengthy affair. Saving for the pianoforte solo by Miss Myra E. Tozer, the musical programme had to be cut; and some of the later speeches abbreviated.

First came the reading of telegrams and letters by Comrade Gorle.

Walter Crane's speech was very short and to the point. Hyndman was "seventy years young." We had come to praise him, not to bury him, and he wondered how much a first-class fighting man like H. M. H. could stand of the polite pillory of praise. He had known Hyndman since the early 'eighties, and though their guest had spoilt his chances of a "career" by devoting himself to Socialism, there was no nobler cause for the life's work of a man.

The chief toast, "H. M. Hyndman," was spoken to by no less than six speakers. The proposer was George Bernard Shaw, who said he should now claim to be the second Socialist in England. His satire on the progress made by the working class was very biting—twenty or more years ago they established the dockers' "tanner," and now the wages of unskilled labour was officially fixed at threepence an hour. He congratulated Hyndman on the fact that the treachery and faithlessness of the Labour movement had prevented him from wasting his time in Parliament. Nobody believed nowadays that appealing to reason and justice was any good —hence the appeal to windows; and the miners knew that if they "listened to reason" it was not the minimum wage that would be settled, but themselves. So pressure on Parliament was being applied from outside. We now found that collectivism was just as useful for the capitalists' purposes as for ours—the capitalist would have security for his dividends and the worker security for his slavery. Hyndman would fight against that tendency as he had done from beginning to end.

Harry Quelch, who made a presentation to Hyndman from the "Old Guard" of the S.D.F. of gold studs and cuff

links, remarked that of those who had rallied to Hyndman at the beginning not one had gone over to the enemy, though some of those who came in later had done so. Some of them had attained to high honour. There were plenty of Cabinet Ministers, however, whose names would be forgotten, but nobody would have any doubt about who was the founder of modern Social-Democracy in this country. When the S.D.F. started out, they had the vehement opposition of the organised workers. Now the sentiment expressed by the organised workers was on the side of Social-Democracy, and even the sham social reforms of Lloyd George were a tribute to the effective work of Hyndman. He had fought a good fight, and had kept the faith.

H. G. Wells, "as an outsider," spoke of Hyndman's "magnificent obstinacy." While some of them might have been erratic forwards, they could always rely on Hyndman at the goal. He, personally, had differed from the orthodox school as represented by Hyndman, and had been disposed to believe in the reasonableness of the ruling and the propertied classes, but it was most extraordinarily not apparent at the present time; and the laugh was at present with the orthodox school, and Hyndman was more right than ever.

Dan Irving — breezy as the sea on which he sailed — followed. He thought pressure from inside would be useful in Parliament; to prevent Hyndman from entering there the capitalist parties had spared neither men nor money. Hyndman, however, had attained to that immortality which counted for anything at all.

Jean Longuet, in a charming little speech, alluded to Hyndman's love for the French people and for French ideals.

Leonard Hall spoke for the younger section who had come in to make up the British Socialist Party, and of their warm admiration for its chairman.

Then, the toast having been drunk with musical honours, and with rousing cheers for Hyndman and his wife, the old chieftain replied. He could not but recall the past—the men who were Socialists here before him: Adolphe Smith with his experiences of the Commune; Sam Oliver, who issued a manifesto in London in 1871 in support of the Communards; Horrocks and "little Jack Williams." Then of the other men who joined with him in the early days of the S.D.F.—Joynes, Morris, Evans, Culwick, the Murrays, and Pearson. He spoke with manifest feeling of these and of the unseen workers, like Comrade Thackeray, who had

helped to build up the movement. It was splendid to look back. He thought, however, we were coming to a more agreeable if more troublous time—an awakening of revolt against the present system. We as Socialists did not want the change to take an anarchical shape, and the present strike would have been unnecessary if our ideas had been adopted. As one of the rank and file he thought we should feel glad if we had helped to bring the change nearer by twenty, ten, or even a single year. He never thought it would take all this time, but he did not regret one hour of it. After paying a tribute to Mrs. Hyndman for the help she had rendered him, our veteran comrade wound up with a splendid peroration in which he hoped for a few more years in which to work for Socialism.

Other toasts followed. Dr. Clark gave "The Old Guard of the S.D.F.," to which Hunter Watts and Jack Williams responded, the latter recalling the suspicions with which he and others first regarded Hyndman's entrance into the movement, and how those suspicions soon vanished.

Russell Smart spoke briefly to the toast of "International Social-Democracy," which was responded to by J. Köttgen and Vibant. The former said Hyndman's greatest service was the dissemination of Socialist doctrine in the country of the greatest strategic importance; and this minimum wage movement was largely due to Hyndman's activity.

Victor Grayson, in a neat little speech, proposed "The Chairman," Walter Crane replied, and so finished an historic meeting.

Among the telegrams received were the following:—

"The Socialist Party of Milan sends to the champion of scientific Socialism in the country considered the most refractory (sympathising with the marvellous uprising of the miners) affectionate salutations and hopes for the speedy emancipation of the slave class.—Schiavi."

"Hindered from coming. Please let Comrade Hyndman know all the International honour him the oldest and most unflinching fighter for the Socialist class war in England.—On behalf of the German Social-Democracy in Austria, Victor Adler."

"Congratulations. Hope good for thirty years longer.—Belfort Bax, Cecilia Bax, Julia Dawson, Ben Tillett."

"Many happy returns. May you live to be the first Socialist Premier.—*The Clarion*."

"Sub-Council still sitting *re* Miners' Strike. Serious

for our Union. Please excuse. May Comrade Hyndman live many more years to help in the working-class fight. Good luck and best wishes.—WILL THORNE."

"Hindustani Nationalists wish Hyndman long life.—MADAME CAMA."

Other telegrams came in from George Bateman, Brooks, Byrne (Burnley), Socialists of Burnley Post Office, Communist Club, Durban Socialists, J. G. Goldspink, R. B. Cunninghame Graham, Dick Greenwood, Hull Socialist Club, Charles Kitching, Leiper (Lanark), Dr. Nelson (Hull), F. Morton, H. F. Northcote, Poplar Labour Representation Committee, Rippon and others (Burnley), John and Julia Scurr, Alex. M. Thompson, Wigginton and others (Oxford), Yallop (Finsbury Park), Edward Atkin, Peter and Sophie Kropotkin, Conrad Noel, C. H. Norman, W. Weatherby, the Cambridge University Fabian Society, and the following branches of the British Socialist Party: South Aberdeen, Barry, Birkenhead, Bow and Bromley, North Bristol, Broadway, Burnley, Falkirk, Gateshead, Leeds District Council, West Leeds, Letchworth, Levenshulme, East Liverpool, South-West Manchester, Newcastle, Norwich, Portsmouth, Rochdale, South Salford, South Hackney, Southwark, Stockport, Weymouth, Wigan, Earlestown, Grimsby, Plymouth, and Southend.

The following are a few of the letters in English and translated which were received by Mr. F. H. Gorle and myself on the occasion of this dinner. Gorle's kindly efforts in the matter I shall always gratefully remember.

I

From the International Socialist Bureau: "The members of the Executive Committee of the International Socialist Bureau instruct me to request you to convey to our friend Hyndman the expression of their affectionate regard and congratulations on the occasion of his seventieth anniversary. They recall and admire the services which he has rendered to the proletariat with an untiring courage, and they wish him long life, so that he may for a long time yet propagate the gospel. They will also be glad if you will salute, on their behalf, Mrs. Hyndman, who has shared with her husband in a fruitful and arduous life.—CAMILLE HUYSMANS."

II

From August Bebel:—

"Zurich,
"*March* 5, 1912.

"Worthy Comrades—The severe illness of my daughter compelled me to travel here from Berlin, and the same reason, unfortunately, makes it impossible for me personally to take part in the festival of our comrade Hyndman, so I am compelled to forward to him and you my hearty good wishes on his seventieth birthday. The day on which Hyndman is honoured is also a day of honour for British Social-Democracy. British Social-Democracy possesses in him its oldest champion and leader; he, indeed, fostered it, and was one of the first who sowed the seed of modern Socialism in the British Empire, and now he sees grow and ripen the seed which he scattered.

"Not only, however, British, but also International Social-Democracy looks to-day on Hyndman as one of its oldest adherents and champions, who stands at all times undismayed at the head, and whom the insults and slanders of our opponents never prevented from playing the man. I wish the guest of the evening a long life still, with full mental and bodily vigour, and add further the wish that he may live to see great further progress and many victories for the ideas which he has advanced both in and out of England. With a comrade's greetings, yours, A. Bebel."

III

From Ledebour: "Dear Comrade Hyndman—It gives me great pleasure to be able to congratulate you on your seventieth birthday, and especially so as I am myself a child of March 7, though I saw the light eight years later than you. As you never were a behind-man, but always before your time, I hope you will have a good run still in the front rank of Socialist fighters for a good score of years, for nothing keeps one younger than a revolutionary heart and pluck to fight all that is shabby and mean in our greedy society. And, therefore, I finish with three cheers for the old man always young."

IV

From Jules Guesde: "If I were not so ill it would be both a pleasure and a duty for me to be with you in order to

honour the seventieth anniversary of our good friend and fighter Hyndman. Men like him honour International Socialism, for which he has done so much in always advocating it on lines which insure its success. May Hyndman remain for a long time in the fighting line, and may his voice be heard more and more by the workers of England."

V

From H. van Kol (Holland): "On the seventieth birthday of my friend Mr. H. M. Hyndman I wish to send a word of sympathy to the old combatant, one of the first in Albion to defend the noble cause of Social-Democracy, and who founded already thirty years ago the S.D.F. Hail to the man and the combatant! Hail to one of the last comrades of the Old Guard!"

VI

From sixteen Socialist members of the Lower House and one Member of the Upper House of the Swiss Parliament: "United with you in spirit, we celebrate the completion of the seventieth year in the life of the veteran H. M. Hyndman. For decades he has stood at the head of the Socialist vanguard in the battle of the working class of Great Britain, and has thereby rendered great service to the working classes of the whole world."

VII

From Edward Carpenter: "I am obliged for your reminder about the dinner on March 7, and regret that, owing to a family bereavement, I cannot be present. I would have liked to come and meet old comrades, and add a word in honour of my long-time friend Hyndman, who, since that day when I first met him, thirty years ago, in a basement room of Westminster Bridge Buildings, has done such fine work in the good old cause—work of which we are now beginning to see the fruits. My congratulations to him and to all those present."

VIII

From Alfred Russel Wallace: "I have long been an admirer of Mr. Hyndman's long and continuous work for Socialism. When I was in the outer darkness of individualism

with Mill and Spencer, he tried to convert me by letter, but I never had the pleasure of meeting him. I wish I could dine with him, but have not really 'dined' (in the gastronomic sense) this twenty years or more. I was first and once for all converted to Socialism by Bellamy's convincing works. With best wishes for Mr. Hyndman's health for many years to come, and that he will specially enjoy this dinner with his friends and admirers."

IX

From Israel Zangwill: "I am sorry I cannot attend your dinner at the Monico, but I was previously pledged to attend a dinner at the Trocadero. Although I shall, when this is read, be sitting there under the chairmanship of a Rothschild, it is only in the cause of charity, and does not prevent me from sympathising with a Hyndman. His name belies him, for he is not a Hyndman, but a Superman. My sympathy, however, is more with the Superman than with his Socialism. The true Superman gives of his strength to the weaker, and so should a true State. I do not think this could be done under the current conception of nationalising all capital, but even the crudest Socialism is better than the orthodox gospel of 'every man for himself and the devil take Mr. Hyndman.' Long may your guest flourish to challenge the mediocrity of the middle classes."

X

From Professor E. S. Beesly: "I am afraid old age and infirmity will prevent me from leaving home. As you are no doubt aware, I am not a Social-Democrat; but I heartily congratulate my old friend Mr. Hyndman on attaining his seventieth year."

XI

From George Lansbury, M.P.: "I regret very much indeed that I cannot attend the dinner in honour of H. M. Hyndman. No man or woman in the Socialist movement has done as much for Socialism in this country as he, and he deserves all the honour we can give him. I hope his splendid example of devotion to principle, and his refusal to in any sort of way compromise with what he believed to be true, will be an inspiration to every one of us loyally to adhere to what we believe to be right. . . . I join with all present in

wishing long life to our comrade, and also to his good wife, who we all know as his devoted comrade both in times of success and also of defeat."

XII

From Frederic Harrison: "I cannot be in London on March 7, and as I now live in the country, two or three hours from town, and had my eightieth birthday last year, I have for some time past declined to join any public dinner. I send my very good wishes to Mr. H. M. Hyndman, whose book I have read with great interest and pleasure; and I trust that he will add another telling volume in another ten years' time, 1922, when you may celebrate his accession to high office."

XIII

From Maurice Hewlett: "If I could come, I certainly would, but I am already engaged, and cannot break off. My sympathies, as you have guessed, are very much with Mr. Hyndman, who has been a champion of honesty for longer than I can remember. I know of no public man of such sincerity and courage as his, and doubt if our country knows how to breed them now. I beg that you will convey to him my cordial and respectful congratulations."

XIV

"Die Neue Zeit,
"Wochenschrift der Deutschen Sozialdemokratie,
"Berlin—Friedenau,
"*den* 3. *März*, 1912.

"Dear Comrade—I should have been only too delighted to come over, that I might bring my congratulations in person to the Veteran of the British Party. But my work renders that impossible. Thus I must content myself with a letter to show how highly I respect and esteem him for his self-sacrifice and work done in the service of our cause.

"We Socialists form, all over the world, one big family, in which at times there are lively differences of opinion, but whose members are always conscious of their solidarity to each other, and, above all, that applies to those who feel that they have a common bond in their intellectual descent from the same philosophic ancestor, Karl Marx.

"Certainly Marxism is no hard-and-fast rule, but a loving

method and source of intelligence. Consequently, one can see that Marxism takes on special forms in the various countries in accordance with their peculiar conditions. We can distinguish to-day a German school of Marxism, an Austrian, a Russian, and a French one, and thus also a British, which again is different to the American. Although united in principle, yet each of them develop another side of our movement with singular force. There is certainly no more powerful or more energetic embodiment of the British section of Marxism than Hyndman, their founder and their leader from the very first. Hyndman's Marxism is no imported product, "Made in Germany," but a genuine British growth, which, just because Hyndman himself is a thorough Englishman, is only to be grasped by those who understand that.

"He is an Englishman in his peculiar mixture of perseverance, untiring activity, and passionate enthusiasm, which we admire in him as we admire it in the British nation in general.

"That, however, does not prevent him from being a good Internationalist. Many of his utterances in the last year, relating to the necessity for England to be powerful at sea, have been explained in a jingo sense, but they were not, that is certain, so intended. Whatever one may think on the question of their justification, or whether they were opportune, they were certainly far from all hostility to the German people, and only estimated by hostility to the exploiters and oppressors of this people. The confidence and sympathies of the German proletariat for the champion of the British Social-Democracy have not diminished in consequence.

"We feel ourselves at one with Hyndman in the fight for our common aim, and are certain that if ever the peace between England and Germany is threatened, that Hyndman would oppose war with all his power as energetically as any of us, and certainly more than many a Parliamentary friend of peace.

"Hyndman's seventieth birthday is a day of rejoicing not only for English Socialists, but for those of the entire International. The International Socialist movement can make no definite progress if England lags behind. For many years, however, it was only the group who were gathered round Hyndman who made common cause with the proletariat of the world. To Hyndman belongs the credit that

he was the first to unfold the red banner of Socialism in England, that he has carried it for a generation without hesitating or doubting for a single moment, and unmoved by scorn and hatred. Despite his seventy years, he shows himself so fresh and energetic that we can dare to expect that he will live to enter the promised land which he has seen from afar, and has led us to the land of promise, that is the Social Revolution.

"With hearty greetings to Hyndman, best regards to Mrs. Hyndman, who shared his works and troubles, and shares his honour, and with best greetings to yourself, dear comrade.—Fraternally yours,

"(Signed) K. KAUTSKY."

XV

Reuter's Telegram Company.

Dated, Durban, 7/3.

Received in London, 7/3/2.

Hyndman, Café Monico, Piccadilly, W.

DURBAN, *March 7th.*

Many happy returns of the day, Durban Socialists.

Reuter.

XVI

"STOCKHOLM,
"*March 3rd,* 1912.

"H. M. Hyndman, Esq.

"DEAR COMRADE—It is an honour for me for the part of the Swedish Social Democratic Labour Party to join all the comrades who are here to-day celebrating the seventieth birthday of the old pioncer in England of Socialism in general and especially of Marxistic thoughts. The views of the distinguished comrades that here are present are, I think, different on certain points, and they may not have always have been the same as them. You have so consequently devoted your life to propagate. But the most of those differences remain only matter of tactics. In the fundamental opinion that from the present Capitalistic state of things we must evolute to a Socialistic Society, and that this evolution must be principally the result of the efforts of the Working Class itself, I think we all agree, therefore it must be pleasing for the members of the other branches of

the Socialist International to see that representative members of different fractions of the great Socialist Labour movement in England remember their common origin, and have come together to-day to celebrate the veteran Hyndman, and thank him for a life-long work for our common cause.—Yours fraternally,

"(Signed) HJALMAR BRANTING,
"M.P., Chairman of the Executive Committee of the Social Democratic Labour Party of Sweden, Editor of the Daily *Social Democratic* of Stockholm."

XVII

"BROTHERHOOD CHURCH, SOUTHGATE RD.,
"45 FAIRBORNE ROAD, TOTTENHAM, N.,
"*March 4th*, 1912.

"Mr. Fred. H. Gorle.

"DEAR SIR AND COMRADE—

Dinner to H. M. Hyndman.

"At the usual Sunday afternoon meeting for men and women at the above church on the 3rd inst. I was requested to send you the following resolution, which was passed unanimously:—

"'That this meeting of the Brotherhood Church (London) Weekly Conference on Social Questions sends its heartiest greetings to Mr. H. M. Hyndman on the occasion of his seventieth birthday, and trusts that he may long be spared to continue his inspiring work for the emancipation of the workers and the uplifting of the whole human race.'

"I shall be glad if you will see that this is communicated to the right quarter, as we would like to have it read at the dinner on the 7th.—Yours fraternally,

"(Signed) G. J. HARRIS,
"*Conference Sec.*"

XVIII

"MANCHESTER,
"6.3.12.

"DEAR MR. HYNDMAN—I wish to be one of those who to-morrow will offer you their warm congratulations. Had

it not been for an engagement which will take me to Liverpool to-morrow, I should have been present at your birthday festival, and I deeply regret that I am obliged to give up this pleasure. I feel to-day, in common, I am sure, with thousands of English men and women, the debt we owe you for your fearless exposure of political and social corruption, and your untiring championship of the oppressed.

"Now when many of the evils which you predicted seem to be coming upon Socialists it is good that, mainly through your teaching, there is a strong body of people in our country instructed in scientific Socialism who will be able to take advantage of the opportunities that may presently be open to them.

"In the congratulations and thanks that I offer to you I desire to include Mrs. Hyndman, who has always so splendidly helped you, and stood by your side, true mother of the people for whom you have worked; and I earnestly hope that you may both be with us for many more years.—I remain, yours sincerely,

"(Signed) C. Despard."

XIX

"House of Commons,
"*March 7th*, 1912.

"Dear Comrade—I regret to find myself unable to be with you this evening. Please convey my greetings and best wishes to the guest of the evening, and believe me.—Yours fraternally,

"J. Keir Hardie.

"F. H. Gorle, Esq."

XX

"Dock Wharf and General Workers' Union,
"425 Mile End Rd., London, E.,
"21/2/12.

"Dear Comrade Gorle—Yours of the 20th to hand, *Re* H. M. Hyndman's dinner, I should be most happy to do anything to or for the committee. I don't think I shall be able to give you much time, but what help I can give I will to help in the matter.—Wishing you the best of luck, faithfully yours,

"Harry Orbell."

XXI[1]

"L'Humanité, Paris,
"24*th February* 1912.

"From Amilcare Cipriani.

"Dear Comrade—I am much obliged to you for having thought of me in connection with the little fête that the S.D.F. offers to our dear and valiant friend H. M. Hyndman, with which I most heartily associate myself.

"Hyndman for me is the personification of the fearless, tireless, and courageous fighter for Socialism in England, and in my opinion is not appreciated at his true worth. He is one of those men who have exalted our great ideal of justice and human redemption, who have made us love it, respect it, and extol it at one and the same time.

"Hyndman, the indefatigable champion, the vigorous and uncompromising tribune, has the right to the esteem not only of his English friends but of those of all countries, of International Socialism in short, of which he is one of the most respected members.

"Allow an old friend of Hyndman's, a veteran of the social revolution, to assure the triumph of which he has given up thirty-two years of his life, to raise my glass and drink to the health of my friend Hyndman as seventy-year-old, and to the triumph of the Social Revolution."

XXII

"12*th April* 1912,
"238 Bd. Raspail, Paris.

"Dear Citizen Hyndman—A short illness has prevented me from writing to you at the time to present to you in my

[1] Amilcare Cipriani, the writer of the above letter, is one of the martyrs of the Italian movement. No man has suffered more than he: no man has stood more unflinchingly by his cause under circumstances which must have broken down a weaker nature altogether. Cipriani has been in prison for twenty-two years, and was chained continuously to a wall for eight of them. Nothing but his splendid physique, his indomitable pluck, and his greatness of mind enabled him to retain his reason under such terrible conditions of mental and bodily torture. He never gave way then: he is as determined and as sanguine as ever now. In appearance one of the most magnificent men of his race, he has all the charm and courtesy of manner which distinguish the noblest of the Italian people. I do not always agree with Cipriani as to the methods best adapted to bring about the complete social transformation we both have in view; but I feel whenever I see him or hear from him that I have scarcely the right to differ from one who has given such far greater proof of devotion to the cause than myself. His letter gave me almost more satisfaction than perhaps any other I received. It is an honour I shall think of with pleasure to the day of my death.

own name, and that of my Russian political friends, my sincere and warm felicitations on the occasion of your seventieth birthday.

"We all esteem in you the vigorous thinker and man of action who throughout his whole life has put the struggle for an idea above every consideration of compromise; who never sought for popularity at the cost of surrender of principle; who never in his estimates of the conditions of class warfare in other countries allowed himself to be blinded by unadaptable dogma running the risk of apparent contradictions in order to remain in harmony with fundamental truth; who in a word has been a man of action in the true sense of that word.

"I have had the opportunity personally of appreciating more than once the charm of your cordial reception, and it is with the sincerest sympathy I send you my wishes for a long and happy life, to the benefit of your own people and of international Socialism, of which you are one of the most representative figures.

"I beg you at the same time to offer on my part my respectful regards to Mrs. Hyndman, your noble and worthy companion.—Very cordially yours,

"E. Roubanovitch."

XXIII

"The *Daily Chronicle*,
"Whitefriars St., London, E.C.,
"*Feb.* 22, 1912.

"Dear Sir—I thank you for your kind letter of yesterday's date inviting me to be present at the dinner in honour of Mr. H. M. Hyndman. I am extremely sorry that I am unable to accept the invitation.

"I shall take the opportunity of having something in the *Daily Chronicle à propos* of the dinner about Mr. Hyndman's striking personality and wonderful career.—Yours truly,

"Robert Donald."

Letters of congratulation were also received from the Hon. and Rev. James G. Adderley, Mrs. H. Alexander, James B. Allan (Glasgow), Edouard Anseele, Bertrand, E. Nesbit Bland, Robert Blatchford, A. J. Bywaters, Amilcare Cipriani, C. F. Davis, Mrs. Despard, Robert Donald (*Daily*

Chronicle), Louis Dubreuilh (for the French Socialist Party), Robert Edmondson, A. E. Fletcher, Furnemont (Belgium), John Galsworthy, Dr. John Glasse, J. Keir Hardie, M.P., Rev. Stewart D. Headlam, Arthur de la Hooke, Ernest de la Hooke, Bellerby Lowerison, G. Moore-Bell, Rev. Conrad Noel, Harry Orbell, Rev. W. H. Paine, Arnold Pinchard, Eden Philpotts, A. A. Purcell, Elizabeth Robins, W. Stephen Sanders, Rose E. Sharland, C. F. Sixsmith (Barry), John Stokes, G. R. S. Taylor, Alex. M. Thompson, Ben Tillett, Colin Veitch, Emery Walker, Lady Warwick, Rosalind Travers, H. Halliday Sparling, Belle Small, Emma Boyce, E. C. Fairchild, John Moore (Rochdale), Edward Brashier, J. B. Askew, Aspin (Nelson), Mr. and Mrs. Scott (Burnley); also from the Brotherhood Church, Southgate Road, the Burnley Lane Socialist Institute, and the Anfield, Blackburn, Charlestown, Halifax, Litherland, and Westminster B.S.P. branches.

CHAPTER XXIII

BEGINNING AFRESH

I ADMIT that when I had heard and read those far too kind and appreciative letters recorded in the last chapter, I thought it was about time I should take a rest, after the long, arduous, and harassing period of agitation and controversy, whose events I have partly summarised in this volume. Is there not some impatient doctor, with greedy undertakers in permanent attendance, who proposed not long ago that all mankind should be painlessly wiped out at the age of fifty, as having then reached the years when physical and mental decay must inevitably set in? Yet here are Lord Halsbury, Lord Wemyss, and Lord Strathcona displaying marvellous activity even in the lethal Chamber of the House of Lords. Nay, here is an octogenarian, himself a doctor, bent on personal refutation of his brother medico, by performing the duties of Lord Mayor of London, with much satisfaction to himself and others, and the famous Positivists, Edward Beesly and Frederic Harrison, are writing as well as they ever did, having attained to the same epoch of labour and sorrow, but concealing their woe under an aspect of exceeding good spirits. Brain-using humanity, I judged, is now addicted to longevity, the anæsthetical physician to the contrary notwithstanding. I was told by genial flatterers that I was really quite young myself. I certainly

felt so. My wife joined in this pleasing conspiracy for my rejuvenation. When, therefore, at their first preliminary Conference, the delegates of the British Socialist Party unanimously insisted that I should take the Chairmanship, in spite of my repeated refusals, I agreed to do so. It was no easy job I entered upon.

I should myself have much preferred to fight on to a finish under the banner of the old Social-Democratic Federation, with its glorious record of more than thirty years of unceasing propaganda and organisation. But the delegates at the Conference at Coventry decided the time had come for a strenuous endeavour to widen our boundaries, and the attempt was successfully made. Successfully so far. But the miserable education of our working classes, their deplorable lack of organisation and discipline in any high sense—I can but reassert my conviction as to this again and again, so strongly do I feel it to be sound—make the constitution of a Socialist Party in Great Britain an extremely difficult task, as compared with what may be achieved by a similar amount of effort in any foreign country. For on the top of all this, upon which I have before enlarged, and the national addiction to compromise, to which I have also referred, there is that curious admixture of semi-secular religion with politics which is to be found nowhere else in the world; turning every Nonconformist chapel and schoolroom throughout whole districts into capitalist-Liberal agencies and centres for the propagation of more anti-Socialism than the anti-Socialist League would deliver itself of, unaided, in a hundred years. Two of our ablest and most active foreign comrades, Camille Huysmans and Doche,[1] who have lately been in England, and

[1] Camille Huysmans is a Deputy in the Belgian National Assembly, as well as permanent Secretary of the International Socialist Bureau. Doche is a member of the Brussels Municipal Council.

who, before their visit, thought that the conditions in this island were much the same as in other countries, who vainly imagined, also, that the Labour Party was at bottom a Socialist organisation, have been rudely undeceived as the result of their close personal investigation all round. I hope sincerely they will give their impartial judgment to the world as forcibly as they have recently expressed it to me.

One thing impressed them mightily, though by no means favourably—"General" Booth's funeral. They never would have believed, they said, unless they had seen it with their own eyes, that, quite apart from his own immediate following, such an astounding tribute of respect would have been paid by the people at large to a man who, in their opinion (and mine), was no more than a dexterous old charlatan, who had used religion to beguile people to their economic hurt. I asked my friends whether they did not think this sort of quasi-religionism, used to chloroform the masses, and to force competition to its utmost limit in the name of Christianity and philanthropy, was not even more difficult to cope with, in some ways, than the tremendous organisation of the Catholic Church which they had to encounter? They seemed to think it might be.

Another thing struck them, as it does all foreigners who come here and look about them—the frightful extent of the slum area in all our great centres of population, and the woeful look of the people who inhabit these aggregations of horror. Nothing at all approaching to it, in proportion, is to be seen, they aver, in their own country, or anywhere in Europe. That also is my own opinion. And in this respect of widespread misery and marked physical deterioration, I can but say once more, things are worse, not better, than they were when I was a lad. Sanitation may have improved, but

the general physical standard of the population has gone down. This was strongly impressed also upon some Canadian friends of mine, serving in the Canadian militia themselves, when they inspected our "Territorials" in camp. They compared their physique and general appearance naturally enough with those of the men in the Colonial force of which they were members. They spoke as if shocked at what they had seen.

Now, it is quite obvious that this national problem of the decay of our national life—for it is nothing less—cannot be dealt with by charity, individual effort, or private benevolence. All that has been tried and found wanting in every direction. Nor can what is euphemistically called "State Socialism," which means only the enthronement of a capitalist bureaucracy, with its vast possibilities, it may be said certainties, of corruption, effect a complete resuscitation of vitality and strength. Even in Germany, where bureaucratic interference is carried almost to the full extent that is possible, and some of the attempts to arrest degeneracy are well-meant and well-applied, where also the population has only just begun to suffer from the crushing effects of capitalism and the great industry in the towns—even in Germany the inevitable deterioration which follows upon the excessive strain of competitive industry in great cities, upon bad housing, bad food, and insufficient leisure, is beginning to manifest itself, and not all the militarist methods of drill and the like will suffice to prevent this decay from spreading farther under the conditions of to-day.

Those who imagine, also, that Trade Unionism, which even now means only the organisation of a small minority of the working population, can effectively handle these questions, do not take account of what is going on. Trade Unionism,

the marshalling of what is still in effect no more than an "aristocracy of labour," is, in my opinion, virtually played out as a powerful economic and social agency, if indeed it has ever been played in.

The Trade Union Congress of this very year, 1912, has been a most depressing affair. There was a sort of mechanical jubilation alike at the access of numbers to the different Unions, and at the larger forces represented as a whole compared with last year. But, as I pointed out when I went down and spoke to a great meeting at Newport, where the Congress was held, there were barely as many Trade Unionists represented, in proportion to the increase of the population, as there were at the first Congress I ever attended in 1872, forty years back. Still three-fourths or four-fifths of the wage-earners remain wholly unorganised outside. That is Trade Union progress! So dull and ineffective also have their discussions become that I did not myself think it worth my while to remain twelve hours in the town in order to go and listen to them.

Though Thorne, himself an old Social-Democrat, delivered a very sound opening address as Chairman of the Congress, the general tone of the debates and resolutions was actually reactionary. It seemed to me quite inconceivable, for instance, that a body of working delegates should decide, after having adopted the principle of secular education in public schools year after year, to drop that demand altogether. This fatuous decision will, I have little doubt, be reversed in the near future; but what is to be thought of a rising class that thus wobbles about in regard to the duties of the State, which they claim they should control and transform into a democratic Commonwealth? What feeling can any man of sense have for such imbecile floundering but contempt? We have indeed still

to "educate our masters" in a sense which Mr. "Bob" Lowe scarcely understood in 1866.

In other directions the tone of the Congress was equally unsatisfactory. Those of the delegates present whom I met seemed to be thoroughly ashamed of the whole miserable business. I do not wonder at it. No Socialist, conscious of the great historic destiny which the workers of this country are called upon to fulfil, could feel otherwise than discouraged at the low plane of intrigue, petty squabbling, and lack of high ideal on which the Congress, as a whole, ranged itself. In any other country in the world, outside China, where Trade Unionists were gathered together, Socialism pure and undefiled would be in the midst of them and would preside over their deliberations. Here they are all so "practical" that, merely as Trade Unionists, they mark time with much display of movement, and the Leader of the Labour Party in the House of Commons comes down to the Congress specially to apologise for the incapacity of the group to do anything really beneficial for the people in Parliament! Imagine Bebel or Jaurès on a similar errand! These able men are ready to accept any advantage from the faction in power; but they remain absolutely independent Socialists, not mere intriguing political dodgers, all the time.

But if the capitalist House of Commons is unable to face the collapse of the competitive system, to recognise that wagedom, like slavedom and serfdom, is coming to an end, or to make the sacrifices necessary to prevent the existing class war from drifting into actual civil war—and there is civil war even to-day, when police and military are used to baton and shoot down revolting wage-earners into subjection, although all the killed and wounded are on one side; if capitalist bureaucracy only intensifies, as it does, the class hatred, and makes the

burdens of the people more grievous to be borne; if Trade Unionism likewise is in manifest decay in every direction, a breakdown hastened on by the Labour Exchanges, the Insurance Act, and other measures; if, further, the workers of Great Britain will persist in putting the whole of the armed forces of the country at the sole disposal of the dominant class—then the outlook here, but for the growth of revolutionary Socialism, would be bad indeed. Social-Democrats have quite clearly defined their position. I, for one, have never ceased to proclaim from one end of the country to the other that in the great class war of our time, the last class war of human history, there are three weapons, and three only, at the disposal of the wage-earners:—

1. The use of politics under a thoroughly democratised system of voting by a class-conscious organised people, in order peacefully to obtain final ownership and control of all the great means of creating and distributing social wealth for the benefit of the whole community on co-operative lines.

2. A thoroughly trained citizen army, under the control of the people, no soldier being at any time deprived of his full rights as a citizen. This citizen army, so far as home affairs are concerned, to be of such a character as to render it impossible for the minority at present holding mastery to withstand by force the will of the majority as declared in Parliament.

3. A General Strike, carefully prepared, with adequate storage of food beforehand, which should be so thoroughly carried out as to compel the surrender of the classes in possession to the overwhelming majority of the nation.

But these, of course, are only means by which to achieve a definite end—that end being to render

the acquisition and distribution of everything that goes to make life useful and enjoyable accessible to all, socially and communally, in return for light, pleasurable, and effective labour, contributed by every healthy adult. The methods are to be preferred in the order in which they are placed.

It is childish to denounce politics merely because the first attempts to make Parliamentary representation directly effective have not been immediately successful. Socialists are endeavouring not to "make" a revolution—no man and no body of men can do that—but to give as peaceful an outlet as possible to the revolution already forcing its way through the incrustations deposited by the previous social periods. The final climax to the struggle may be cataclysmal or gradual as in other natural processes. Just in proportion as the development is understood by a greater or a smaller number of the population is the prospect of resistance or acceptance the more probable. Just in so far as the object in view is comprehended and its method of application becomes a matter of common knowledge, is the likelihood reduced of a period of anarchy followed by an interval of dictatorship before the desired goal is attained.

Meanwhile, in this country at any rate, all sorts of unsound and dishonest proposals will be forced to the front by the plutocrats and their trustified press, with the hope of postponing the decisive struggle for another generation at least. One example of this we have before us already. A crew of wealthy Radical resurrectionists have disinterred Henry George's Single Tax nostrum, which I confess I thought had been buried for good and all thirty years ago. But no, the "capitalists' last ditch," as Marx called it, has not been filled up finally with the remains of this bootless burden-shifting panacea for all economic ills. Baron

de Forest, Joseph Fels, Josiah Wedgwood, Hemmerde, Outhwaite and Co. are hard at the galvanisation of their exhumed mummy, and George the Second is waiting close by to see whether their charlatanry can imitate vitality to a sufficient extent to capture the votes of the people and justify his appearance on the stage as the true mantle-bearer of the well-meaning but ignorant prophet of the San Francisco Sand Lots.

Needless to say that, as wages are in nowise regulated by the amount of rent, if the landlords were taxed on their holdings to the extent of twenty shillings in the pound, and the money thence obtained were devoted to the reduction of National taxation or the defraying of rates, the only people who would benefit by this confiscation would not be the wage-earners but the capitalists themselves, who would be relieved of their burdens to that precise amount. This I established conclusively in my verbal and written debates with Henry George himself more than a quarter of a century ago. And that no change in the situation has or can have occurred since is evidenced, surely, by the fact that plutocrats are ready to devote large sums of money to the propaganda of the demand for taxation of unearned increment of land value. As well tax unearned profit and unearned interest. All these appropriations from the unpaid labour of workers stand on the same basis.

But this single-tax nonsense is injurious because it diverts public attention from the real difficulties of the land question. Justus Liebig, speaking of agriculture from the farming and chemical point of view, said it was an encyclopædic business. So, properly regarded, it is. But the whole land problem from the sociological point of view is also an encyclopædic business. Not least so in this country. Land, strange as it may seem, will be

the last of the great forms of production to be really socialised. Transport and machinery and manure must all be socialised before the land can become collective property in any beneficial sense.

"Back to the land," therefore, may be a fine political cry, but it will give forth precious little economic wool. In fact, as I told my audience at Newport the other day, "Back to the Land. Back to the Land—the Land of your Fathers!—back to the Land indeed. If you go on as you are going, you will be back to the land long years before you own a foot of it." They then understood that, as Americans say, this was "their funeral." Other forms of taxation may be more just or more advantageous than this Single Tax proposal; but no amount of burden-shifting or improved and dexterous fiscal arrangements can help to solve any great social problem under the conditions of to-day.

So long, therefore, as we allow ourselves to be bemused by the formulas of money and exchange the real phenomena of the production of wealth for use elude our minds, and we are still tramping round in the vicious circle of profit for all. When we have grasped firmly the conception of the creation of wealth without profit for the general advantage of all members of the community, we begin to be able to understand what the next steps in the progress of humanity upwards must be. And Socialism alone can teach us how best to take those steps.

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